

**The Classics, the Cane and Rugby:
The Life of Aubrey Samuel Langley and his Mission to
Make Men in the High Schools of Natal, 1871-1939.**

by

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For 'Bull' and 'Nancy', who shared the journey with me.



A. S. Langley: From a portrait by Butler in the School Library.

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Chapter 1:

Introduction: The Importance of Aubrey Samuel Langley

“He has gone. Aubrey Samuel Langley has died. But his work lives on. His influence continues in the character and the lives of countless of his Old Boys... If of him a testimony you require, look around¹.”

An Old Boy highlights the historical importance of Langley and his educational philosophy in the eulogy he delivered at Langley’s funeral (26 December 1939).

On the seventh of February 2015, Eddie Redmayne was named 2014’s best actor during the Academy Awards ceremony in Hollywood for his role as Steven Hawking in the film *The Theory of Everything*. What very few of the 36.6 million people who watched the ceremony worldwide knew was that Redmayne went to the same school as the British Prime Minister, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Mayor of London, and both Princes William and Harry. In a 2013 article, published before Redmayne’s triumph, the *New Statesman* claimed that Redmayne’s former school, Eton College, has come to “dominate” British public life². Whilst Eton’s headmaster played down the significance of Etonian success in the same article by saying that “this is one of those little moments in history that won’t be repeated”, the prominence of public schools like Eton in British society is not a once off phenomenon nor is it an insignificant coincidence.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the British political and military hierarchy was dominated old Etonians (OE’s). From 1885 to 1905, three OE’s occupied the position of British Prime Minister. Similarly, OE’s occupied the position of Viceroy of India from 1888-1910. In the years 1886-1916, 35 out of 101 British cabinet ministers were OE’s. To add to this, OE’s also edited *The Times* and filled many senior positions within the church throughout the 1880s and 1890s³. Whilst these figures are truly astonishing- the fact that Eton’s twenty year (1866-1886) dominance of the office of the Secretary of State for the Colonies was ended only by the appointment of two successive old Harrovians, Edward Stanhope and Henry Holland, highlights how alumni of English public schools controlled British governmental and imperial policy during this period. This broader public school influence is also evident in the fact that old boys of English public schools occupied 69 out of the 101 cabinet positions available in the years 1886-1916⁴.

Whilst the public school system flourished across the British Isles in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries feeding the British hierarchy with its products, there were also many examples of it being exported to the various British colonies around the world⁵. This is because most of the officials of the British colonial service were public school old boys

¹ The Natal Mercury. 24 December 1939.

² Jason Cowley. “Eton eternal: How one school came to dominate public life.” *New Statesman*. (8 May, 2013).

³ Hugh David. “Heroes, Mavericks and Bounders: The English Gentleman From Lord Curzon to James Bond.” (London: Michael Joseph, 1991).

⁴ Hugh David. *Heroes, Mavericks and Bounders: the English Gentleman from Lord Curzon to James Bond*. (London: Michael Joseph, 1991).

⁵ Peter Randall. *Little England on the Veld*. (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1982). 32

themselves⁶. Public schools were started by these officials in an attempt to establish a wider British cultural influence, which they hoped would consolidate and improve their political control over their colonial subjects⁷. This is why many of Britain's former colonies boast their own "Eton"⁸. In South Africa and, more specifically, Natal there developed a number of boys' schools based on the public school model. Maritzburg College, Durban High School (DHS), Hilton College and Michaelhouse were Natal's 'public schools'.

As many public school products assumed leadership positions, many historians have conducted research into the type of character encouraged by this educational system. Historians operating out of the school of masculinity have specifically highlighted the importance of exploring the type of masculine code cultivated at public schools. It is their belief that we can better understand the history of the British Empire by exploring how ideologies of this elite group of men were moulded by their school experience⁹. British historians such as John Honey, Geoffrey Best, C. B Otley and James Mangan have looked into the practices of English public schools and, in particular, their promotion of cadet corps, schoolboy hierarchy and government, regimented discipline, and athleticism¹⁰. South African historians such as Peter Randall, Robert Morrell and John Lambert have conducted similar investigations into the traditions and practices of South Africa's 'public schools'. The general consensus is that the public school system served to promote an expansionist, elitist, racist, and militaristic sense of masculinity.

In this vein, the importance of headmasters in driving these character traits cannot be underestimated. In his analysis of elite South African schools, Peter Randall highlights the fact that a few South African headmasters were able to place the "stamp of their own personalities" on the schools they administered¹¹. Armed with a similar understanding, many scholars have delved into the lives and ideology of influential English public school headmasters such as Dr Thomas Arnold, the headmaster of Rugby School who conceptualised the influential public school model with its extra-curricular programme and emphasis on the promotion of muscular Christian morality. Studies of educators such as Arnold provide us with a better understanding of the English public school system and the impact they had on the leaders educated under the system. Closer to home, the importance of the headmaster has been stressed by one of Langley's pupils, Neville Nuttall. In his biography of Hilton College, Nuttall stressed the importance of headmasters by saying that

⁶ Paul Rich. *Elixir of Empire: The English Public Schools, Ritualism, Freemasonry, and Imperialism*. (London: Regency Press, 1989). 20

⁷ Rich. *Elixir of Empire*. 37

⁸ Rich. *Elixir of Empire*. 41-42

⁹ Robert Morrell. "'Synonymous with Gentlemen'? White Farmers, White Schools and Labour Relations on the farms of the Natal Midlands, c1880-1920" in J. Crush and A.H. Jeeves (eds.), *White Farms, Black Workers: The State and Agrarian Change in Southern Africa, 1910-1950* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1997). 172

¹⁰ C. B Otley. "Militarization in the Public Schools, 1900-1972". *The British Journal of Sociology*. (1978, 29: 3) and James Mangan. *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology*. (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000). Geoffrey Best. "Militarism and the Victorian public school" in *The Victorian Public School*. Eds. B. Simon and I. Bradley. (London: Gill and Macmillan, 1975).

¹¹ Randall. *Little England on the Veld*. 67

great headmasters are: "...one of the most powerful influences in the life of any generation¹²." This image of the pervasive power of the headmaster, his personality and the longevity of his legacy was also alluded to by Peter Randall who described our subject, Aubrey Samuel Langley, as one of those impressive headmasters who succeeded in consolidating and expanding their often crumbling empires and in imposing the stamp of their own personalities¹³.

To better understand the exportation of the English public school system to Natal this thesis will investigate the school career of this 'public school' headmaster and his influence on elite male education in Natal.

Langley and his life on Natal's frontier

Aubrey Samuel Langley, the second son of the Rev. James and Emma Langley, was born in Pietermaritzburg on the 25th of June, 1871. In 1872, twelve years after Rev Langley arrived in Natal¹⁴, his parents moved to the rural Natal hamlet of York to set up a missionary station and school. They remained in York until the conclusion of the Zulu War in 1879. Thereafter his father sent him to receive a 'decent Methodist education' at Kingswood School in Bath, a minor public school then solely open to the sons of Methodist ministers. After finishing at Kingswood Langley, who seems to have achieved a substandard pass, took up a few boarder mastering and teaching roles in England for a number of years before returning to South Africa in 1896. Back in South Africa- Langley, inspired by his experiences at the minor English public schools he taught at, soon gained renown for promoting the game of rugby in Natal. In 1897 Langley took up a position as Senior Resident Master at Maritzburg College. At College, under the tutelage of College's Headmaster Robert Douglas Clark, Langley finally obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree via correspondence from the University of the Cape of Good Hope. Clark was happy to play tutor as Langley improved College's discipline and athletic program¹⁵. In 1910, having impressed Natal's Education Department, Langley was appointed Headmaster of Durban High School (DHS). During his 22 year reign as headmaster of the DHS Langley gained a prominent reputation as fierce proponent of classical education, schoolboy sport (particularly rugby) and corporal punishment.

The first half of Langley's life coincided with a precarious period in South African history. As a six year old living on the Natal frontier, Langley was witness to the hysteria and fear that spread through the white population of Natal after a Zulu army slaughtered over 1300 British soldiers and auxiliaries at the battle of Isandlwana in January 1879. Just over twenty years later, Langley found himself near the front of yet another war, the Second Anglo-Boer War. In November 1899, just over two years after Langley took up the position of Senior Resident Master at Maritzburg College, College was taken over by the British Army and

¹² Neville Nuttall. *Lift up your hearts: The Story of Hilton College, 1872-1972*. (Hilton: The Hiltonian Society, 1971). 139

¹³ Randall. *Little England on the Veld*. 67

¹⁴ Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. *The Wesleyan Missionary Notices*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1861). 16

¹⁵ MCM. December 1908. 15-16

converted into a military hospital¹⁶. During College's military occupation Langley conversed with many of the British soldiers recovering from wounds and illness and it was during this time that he learnt of the early British military disasters at Ladysmith, Colenso, and Spionkop. Less than five years later Langley found himself serving as a subaltern in the Natal Carbineers during the 1906 Bhambatha uprising. During this campaign Langley lost a man under his command and witnessed the fragility of white rule in Natal. These conflicts, some of them near defeats, were to leave an indelible impression upon Langley's character and his educational philosophy.

Views of Langley and the English public school system he tried to recreate at DHS

In recent years Langley and his educational philosophy have drawn scorn from Stephen Gray who, in a 2012 biographical article on Langley's son (Noel), nonchalantly claimed that Noel prided himself in hastening his father's death¹⁷. Gray's views of Langley echo those of one of Langley's most famous pupils, poet and novelist Roy Campbell, and his most recent biographer Joseph Pearce. In his 2002 biography of Campbell, Pearce described Langley as "the Headmaster from Hell"¹⁸.

The current critique of Langley and the English public school system he implemented at DHS is not surprising as both have become synonymous with corporal punishment which, although legal and supported in Langley's day, is now illegal both in the Britain and in South Africa. Many publications have analysed the system's obsession with this harsh tradition and its import into colonial schools that were modelled on English public schools. Their conclusion is basically that these schools and the masters who ran them actively promoted corporal punishment and other punitive and degrading practices in keeping with the Christian teaching of "spare the rod and beat the child"¹⁹. The authors of these publications claim that most of the masters who taught at English public school genuinely believed that children learnt better through negative reinforcement. Many authors have mentioned Langley's ferocious promotion of corporal punishment. Although tales of his frequent and often public use of the cane are probably the most prominent aspect of the 'Langley legend', an investigation into the life of Langley will reveal far more than the scars left behind by his cane.

Purpose and Rationale of the Study

Previous studies into the exportation of the public school system to South Africa have touched on Langley. However the existence of these studies does not diminish the need for further investigation into Langley, the influence he exerted on 'public school' education in Natal and that impact he had on the boys he taught. It has been estimated that between

¹⁶ Simon Haw & Richard Frame. *For Hearth and Home: The Story of Maritzburg College: 1863-1988*. (Pietermaritzburg: MC Publications, 1988). 165

¹⁷ Stephen Gray. "Noel Langley and Co: Some South Africans in Showbiz Abroad." *Current Writing: Text and reception in Southern Africa* (2012).

¹⁸ Joseph Pearce. *Bloomsbury and Beyond: The Friends and Enemies of Roy Campbell*. (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 2001). 10

¹⁹ J.R de Honey. "Tom Brown's Universe: The Nature and Limits of the Victorian Public Schools Community" in *The Victorian Public School: Studies in the Development of an Educational Institution*. eds. Brain Simon and Ian Bradley. (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1975). 22

10 000-15 000 boys passed through DHS during Langley's tenure as headmaster²⁰. It must also be noted that he played a part in moulding the characters of around 2500-3000 boys who passed through his hands when he was Senior Resident Master at Maritzburg College. Taking these figures into account and the fact that many of these boys went on to dominate the upper echelons of Natal's political, military and economic realms; the subject of Langley and his influence becomes an extremely important consideration in the general narrative of the socio, economic and political history of Natal and South Africa. In fact, Peter Randall named DHS as the school most widely attended by the influential English speakers in South Africa²¹. Taking this into consideration, it is not surprising to note that the Superintendent of the Department of Education in Natal regarded Langley as Natal's most successful Headmaster²².

Langley's influence was also extended and replicated by the men he recruited to teach at DHS. According to Langley, the attitudes of the staff he inherited were as apathetic as his predecessor and, as a result, needed to be reformed or replaced. In his memoirs, Langley stated that "The attitude of the masters required attention and got it, though they never forgot to curse Belcher and Nick [Nicolas- his predecessor] and yet extol the past. The rapid advent of fresh teaching blood as the numbers of the school grew helped to put them in their places²³." Langley's ability to employ men who shared his vision was highlighted by Michael Nuttall when he recalled that his father [Neville Nuttall, who was both Langley's student and colleague at DHS before becoming Headmaster of Ixopo High] having had his own difficulties with the Natal Education Department, admired the way Langley never allowed the Education Department to interfere in his acquisition of staff²⁴. Langley's success in promoting his educational ideas amongst his staff can be seen in the fact that after his retirement his "old guard" of masters were critical of any changes his successor, James Black, made and gradually left DHS to become headmasters elsewhere²⁵.

Langley was prone to hiring young athletic men who shared his passion for sport and who would provide a muscularly robust example for his boys to follow. Probably one of the most influential masters Langley hired was the legendary Bill Payn. Bill was a schoolboy under Langley at College. His size and skill on the rugby field ensured that he was invited to play for Natal in 1912 at the age of eighteen. It is not difficult to see why Langley offered Bill a position on the DHS staff two years later²⁶, a position he held until 1959²⁷.

Probably Langley's most influential import from College and long term influence on education in Natal was Colonel A.C 'Betsy' Martin M.C. Langley taught Martin at College and was one of Langley's first staffing additions at DHS when he was brought in to coach rugby in 1910. In his history of DHS, Jennings describes Martin as "the Disciple who

²⁰ The Natal Mercury. December 24 1939.

²¹ Randall. *Little England on the 'Veld'*. 11

²² Hubert Jennings. *The DHS Story, 1866-1966*. (Durban: Durban High School and Old Boys' Memorial Trust, 1966). 118

²³ Aubrey Samuel Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 24

²⁴ Conversation with Michael Nuttall (2 February 2015)

²⁵ M. A Peacock. *Some Famous Schools in South Africa. Vol. 1: English Medium Boy's High Schools*. (Cape Town: Longman, 1972). 54

²⁶ Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 198-200

²⁷ Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 185

Langley loved, and the one that came closest to following in the footsteps of his Master²⁸.” Julia Martin (Martin’s granddaughter) recalls that “In every conversation that I can remember his name being mentioned, my grandfather represented Langley as a hero from what I can gather, it was partly in his encounters with Langley (the relation of protégé and mentor) that he learnt the values he was to promote as Head of Estcourt High School, and later at DHS²⁹.”

Martin reflected Langley in many ways. As a coach he was as tactless in his critique of his players as Langley. Like Langley, he seemed to use a strange mix of humiliation and praise when dealing with the schoolboys under him. In the 1910 rugby report Martin said that Riquebour was “one of the best forwards the DHS has turned out, when he’s not thinking about his hat³⁰.” Like Langley, Martin valued teamwork and in his rugby report of 1913 he attacked the team’s individualism claiming that the team would not succeed unless they learnt “how to drive an attack together³¹.” The fact that Martin also shared Langley’s belief in the non-physical benefits of sport is evident in his granddaughter’s testimony. According to Julia Martin, “He [‘Betsy’] was very keen on sport and the value of sport in educating body, mind etc.³².”

Like Langley, Martin was also soldier, disciplinarian and committed imperialist³³. His military career with the Durban Light Infantry, which spanned two world wars, saw him decorated with the Military Cross for gallantry³⁴ and rise to the rank of Colonel. In 1943, whilst in a prisoner of war camp, Martin was appointed Headmaster of DHS.

Along with Martin, Langley’s staff contained three other men who became prominent figures within the Natal’s Department of Education. Septimus Pape, who taught at DHS from 1902-1923, went on to lead Vryheid High School and Maritzburg College. John ‘Froggy’ Snow, who taught French at DHS from 1906-1914, went on to become Headmaster of Newcastle High School, Glenwood High School and Maritzburg College³⁵. Neville Nuttall, who was taught by Langley in 1917 and who taught English and Latin at DHS from 1926 well into the 1940s, went on to become Headmaster of Newcastle High School, Inspector of School and Head of the Natal Teachers’ Training College before taking up a teaching post at Hilton College after his retirement³⁶. Thus, even after he died, Langley’s education model continued to be influential as elements of this philosophy were reproduced by those members of Langley’s staff who went on to assume leading positions and influential roles within Natal’s education system.

²⁸ Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 184

²⁹ Correspondence with Julia Martin (great granddaughter of Col A.C ‘Betsy’ Martin, one of ASL’s protégées) 20 Mar 2014.

³⁰ DHS Magazine. December 1910. 10

³¹ DHS Magazine. December 1913. 11

³² Correspondence with Julia Martin (great granddaughter of Col A.C ‘Betsy’ Martin, one of ASL’s protégées) 20 Mar 2014.

³³ Correspondence with Julia Martin (great granddaughter of Col A.C ‘Betsy’ Martin, one of ASL’s protégées) 20 Mar 2014.

³⁴ DHS Magazine. June 1917. 7

³⁵ Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 181

³⁶ R. G Slater. “Neville Nuttall.” *Natalia*. (13: 1, 1983). 90

Whilst Langley and his educational philosophy were important influences on the boys he taught, this thesis does not assume that the cultivation of the personalities of Langley's pupils can solely be attributed to the influences of the school they attended and the men who taught them. In fact the sixth chapter of this thesis highlights the complexity of masculine character formation. John Tosh has cautioned scholars not to look at schools as the sole source of masculine identity formation³⁷. Whilst Tosh is right in saying that schooling only accounts for part of a young man's life and that we should also pay attention to family relationships and other influences, one must acknowledge the huge role secondary schools and teachers have played in the development of young men. This is especially the case with boys who were boarders. In the case of boarding school pupils, their schools served as their surrogate families for much of their adolescence³⁸. Boarding schools and their staff mould their pupils' characters by promoting a particular set of attributes and values in the various avenues of school life³⁹. If one looks at the amount of space former scholars of Langley's set aside to describe Langley and their relationships with him in their autobiographies and memoirs, one can see the particular impact Langley's personality and lessons had on his former students⁴⁰.

This investigation into Langley and his influence on the upper echelons of Natal's white elite will add to the work of numerous scholars who have investigated the role of the English public school system and English public school masters in popularising and spreading muscular Christianity across the British Empire. However, rather than follow the usual technique of using the broad concept of the public school system as a prism through which one can come to terms with the workings of certain schools and the actions of their staff, this thesis will provide an unusual opportunity to see the system and schools as shaped by influential individuals responding to the demands of their age and location. In brief, this investigation will help us better understand the elite single-sex schools of colonial Natal by viewing them through the lens of one of their best-known teachers. This involves looking at Langley in close detail, from his childhood through to his headmastership of DHS. By obtaining a better understanding of Langley, we gain a better understanding of the English public school system's exportation to the colonies and the mission of colonial 'public schools'.

This thesis seeks to expand upon the works of masculinity theorists such as Jock Phillips⁴¹ and Robert Morrell⁴². Both these historians have provided great insights into rugged

³⁷ John Tosh. "What Should Historians do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain". *History Workshop*. (1994, 38).

³⁸ Robert Morrell. "Masculinity and the white boys' boarding schools of Natal, 1880-1930". *Perspectives in Education*. (1994).

³⁹ J. R. de S Honey. *Tom Brown in South Africa : inaugural lecture delivered at Rhodes University on 10th May, 1972*. (Grahamstown: Rhodes University Press, 1972). 20

⁴⁰ See chapter 4 of Roy Campbell. *Light on a Dark Horse: An Autobiography (1901-1935)*. (London: Hollis & Carter, 1951).

⁴¹ Jock Phillips. *A man's country? The image of the Pakeha male: A history*. (Auckland: Penguin Group, 1987). and Jock Phillips. "The Hard Man: Rugby and the Formation of Male Identity in New Zealand". *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity*. eds. John Nauright and Timothy Chandler. (London: Frank Class, 1996)

⁴² Robert Morrell. *From Boys to Gentlemen: Settler Masculinity in Colonial Natal 1880-1920*. (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2001) and Robert Morrell. "Forging a Ruling Race: Rugby and White Masculinity in Colonial Natal". *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity*. eds. John Nauright and Timothy Chandler. (London: Frank Class, 1996).

masculinity cultivated in white colonial societies of New Zealand and Natal respectively. Any investigation into Langley, a man many prominent colonists entrusted with educating their children, will shed a great deal of light upon the constitution of Natal's colonial elite. An investigation into Langley's obsession with classical education, team sport, corporal punishment, and his relationship with boys who displayed alternative masculine traits will serve as a critical prism through which we may understand the aspirations and actions of his peers.

Research Questions

This research seeks to address four main questions. Each question will provide the reader with a better understanding of the public school system, its adoption in Natal, and the masculine code of the Natal's elite white males.

What was the rationale behind and results of Langley's academic philosophy?

This first question is designed to probe Langley's academic philosophy. More specifically, this question will provide us with an understanding of the rationale behind and the results of Langley's implementation of an academic curriculum full of classical subjects. This insight will provide us with an understanding of the masculine character Langley sought to mould in his pupils and the mentality of the parents who endorsed this curriculum by sending them to Langley's DHS.

What was the rationale behind and results of Langley's sporting philosophy?

This third question is designed to investigate Langley's obsession with team sport. This question will unravel Langley's rationale behind the promotion of schoolboy sport and, in doing so, the rationale behind the 'public school' system's promotion of team sport. This question will also highlight Langley's contribution to both schoolboy and club sport in Natal.

What was the rationale behind and the results of the pedagogical structures Langley put in place or encouraged as a teacher and later the headmaster of DHS?

This second question is designed to examine the pedagogical structures Langley put in place or encouraged as a teacher and later the headmaster of DHS. This will direct enquiry into Langley's endorsement of corporal punishment, domestic privation, and schoolboy hierarchy and government. This question will also help the reader come to grips with the mentality of the parents who encouraged these practices and structures, many of which will horrify the modern parent, by enrolling their sons in Langley's school.

What was Langley's relationship with schoolboys who rebelled against the form of masculinity that he prescribed at DHS and how did this impact the boys in question?

This fourth question is designed to look into Langley's relationship with schoolboys who did not display the masculine traits he valorised at DHS. These young men

endured terrible emotional effects of the public school system. This question will shed light on the system's failure to create masculine conformity and the mixed results of Langley use of physical and mental abuse in dealing with boys who did not conform.

Research setting

As a teacher myself at Maritzburg College and a resident boarder master in Clark House, I am constantly confronted by relics of Langley's time at the school. Every meal I consume in the school's dining hall is punctuated by one of the school's prefects calling for silence before he recites the Latin opening grace, a tradition Langley started at the school⁴³. The tradition of reciting the words *Benedictus, Benedicat per Jesum Christum Dominum Nostrum* (May he who is Blessed bless [this food] through Jesus Christ Our Lord), seems to have stuck around long after he left for DHS in 1910. To find another remnant of Langley's time at Maritzburg College I need only to leave the modern dining hall and walk a few steps towards the school's second oldest building- the Victoria Hall. Once inside this colonial edifice, I need only to tilt my head skywards and gaze upon Langley's painting of Queen Victoria that still hangs in a place of honour in the hall that bears her name. These relics, along with the many photos of rugby teams that Langley captained and coached during his 13 years at Maritzburg College that I walk past daily on my way to the school's staffroom, highlight the enduring legacy of Langley's forceful personality on a school at which he was not even the headmaster.

The reason for choosing this topic stems from my connection with Maritzburg College, first as schoolboy (2003-2007) and then as teacher (2012-2015). During my years at College and the years in between, I came to develop a great interest in the English public school model and its exportation to Britain's colonies. As a product of a former 'colonial public school' I was exposed to remnants of the public school tradition and I soon began to enjoy the discipline, hierarchy, camaraderie, and sense of elitism this system conferred upon me. In truth, I revelled in the pomp and absurdity of it all. The need to understand my own ideology and infatuation with structure, hierarchy, discipline and tradition as a product of my schooling manifested itself in my 2011 honours thesis *Making Men: Maritzburg College and the Construction of a Militaristic Masculinity, 1888-1918*.

My specific interest in writing about Langley as a passionate and forceful proponent of the system which played a role in my own development must stem from Langley's prominence in my honours thesis and my many conversations (both as scholar under him and as a colleague beside him) with Matthew Marwick, the current Senior Resident Master at Maritzburg College (a title that used to belong to Langley). During these conversations, Matthew and I would often share macabrely humorous tales of Langley's outlandish acts of savage corporal punishment or quote some of the tactless anecdotes for which he has become infamous. However, during most of these conversations, the topic would almost always turn towards more heart-warming tales of how Langley openly wept during an assembly in which he read out an ever increasing First World War casualty list and how his body was borne to the grave

⁴³ R. P. Larkan and Son. "The Larkans of Maritzburg College" in *The Larkans of East Griqualand*. (Unpublished)

by a legion of his former pupils who obviously adored him. During these conversations I became increasingly interested in Langley's impact on and continuation of the public school system in Natal, his contradictory behaviour and contradicting accounts of his legacy.

To sum it all up, my interest in this subject can be seen as originating from my attempt to understand my own ideology as a product of my social conditioning, much of which I owe to the five years I spent at Maritzburg College, a school very similar in ethos to DHS and which still harbours many of the traditions and relics of the English public school system which Langley imposed at DHS, and an interest sparked during my honours thesis.

Methodology

Because of the large amount of research that has been conducted on both the English public school system and masculinity, a large section of my thesis was based on secondary sources I obtained from Cecil Renaud Library in Pietermaritzburg, the JSTOR online search engine and the internet. I was also assisted in the procurement of secondary sources by my supervisor Robert Morrell who has large personal collection of texts relating to both the English public school system and masculinity.

Whilst I consulted a number of secondary sources, my research also relied on a number of primary sources. I personally consulted the archives of both Maritzburg College and DHS to obtain information about Langley's time at these two schools. I was also sent a number of magazine extracts relating to Langley's time at Kingswood School (Bath, UK) via email by the school archivist Ms Zoë Parsons.

I was also assisted by Langley's grandniece, Jean Thomassen, who I corresponded with via email from October 2013 and who gave me a copy of Langley's memoirs (*Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*). I also corresponded via email with Michael Cope (Jack Cope's son) and his wife Julia Martin (Col A. C 'Betsy' Martin's granddaughter) after I came across Michael's contact details on his website. After contacting the Maritzburg College Old Boys Association, I was also put into contact with Rev Michael Nuttall who I chatted to on the telephone in early 2015. Rev Nuttall then put me in contact with his brother, Jolyon Nuttall, who I corresponded with in May 2015. My conversations with the Nuttall brothers largely focused on their father's, Neville Nuttall, recollections of Langley.

Whilst these conversations proved insightful and helped shed more light on Langley and his educational philosophy, my efforts to contact Langley's family in the United States of America (his son's side of the family) proved less rewarding. After making contact with Langley's granddaughter, Jacqueline Langley, through an ancestry website- I was sure that I would be able to delve into the stained relationship between Langley and his son. Unfortunately, Jacqueline said she and her family were unwilling to help me with my research as their memories of conversations with their father had faded with time.

Chapter 2:

Schools, Masculinity and Colonial Natal: A Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I lay a foundation for this thesis by providing historical background on the colony, and later province, of Natal and the formation of Maritzburg College and DHS, two of the schools Langley taught at. This chapter also briefly highlights the gender theories of

some of the scholars I have drawn upon in this thesis. An understanding of Natal's turbulent history, the educational history of Natal elite white schools and the work of masculinity scholars dealing with education illuminate Langley's educational ideology and the impact it was meant to have on the masculine makeups of the boys who schooled under him.

Public schools were factories of masculinity and contributed to the construction of upper class gender ideals in the metropole and in the colonies. Masculinity theorists dealing with the public school system in Britain and her colonies have highlighted the specific public school initiatives that had major implications for gender relations. With this in mind, I have investigated these structures in order better to understand Langley, his mission to mould the masculinities of the boys under him, and white colonial masculinity in South Africa.

The first public school structure I investigate is classical curriculum. I explore the implications of classical education by reviewing the work of academics who have investigated the rationale behind the continuation of Latin and ancient Greek in an age in which a mastery of English, other continental languages, science and economics seemed more practical. The second area of focus is on the prominence of team sports and athleticism. My investigation highlights the debates about the perceived physical and mental benefits of athleticism, in particular team sports such as cricket and rugby. It also highlights the role of athleticism in the expanding empire. A third focus is on the non-academic structures and 'traditions' (both metaphysical and physical) that characterised public schools throughout the British Empire. This section examines the rationale behind and results of the use of corporal punishment, domestic privation, and schoolboy hierarchy and privilege system.

Whilst these structures provide great insight into the minds of public school masters like Langley and although many of these men used these structures to help mould the masculinities of the boys who attended their schools, the influence of these structures was not automatic and uncontested. Drawing on the testimonies of on a number of Langley's students who did not display the masculine identity he was trying to instil, this thesis will also highlight the internal resistance to Langley's educational philosophy and his attempts to quell masculine dissidence at DHS.

2.2 Langley's public schools in Natal: the formation of Maritzburg College and DHS.

At the Maritzburg College Speech Day in 1914 the headmaster at the time, Ernest 'Pixie' Barns, highlighted the insecure position of white settlers in Natal by saying: "it must also be remembered that in the peculiar conditions of life in this country, where the white man is outnumbered 10 to 1, an efficient body of young men well-trained and well equipped is a permanent necessity⁴⁴." Barns' comment suggests that in order to fully understand education in Natal at the turn of the twentieth century one has to place the teachers and the schools they taught at within their wider historical context. In order to do this I intend to describe the tumultuous early years of Natal's British occupation, this colony's strong links with Great Britain and the ideas and practices of the English public school system that British settlers sought to replicate in Natal.

⁴⁴ MCM. July 1916.

British settlement in Natal began in 1824 after a small group of English colonists decided to establish a trading post at a place they called Port Natal. Although Britain was initially reluctant to tie down troops in Natal, Natal became an official colony in 1844⁴⁵. The population of Natal's two main cities, Durban (the economic capital whose harbour settlement was originally called Port Natal) and Pietermaritzburg (the judicial and legislative capital originally founded to supply Natal's inland agricultural community), grew rapidly in 1849 due to an influx of thousands of British immigrant settlers. These settlers were drawn to Natal by advertisements emanating from British immigration companies such as J.C. Byrne and Co. Despite having left the British Isles, the English inhabitants of Durban and Pietermaritzburg maintained strong ties with Britain as many of them still had family in Britain and considered it their true home⁴⁶. This connection to Britain was reinforced through various symbols, rituals and institutions⁴⁷.

2.2.1 The establishment of Durban High School and Maritzburg College

By the 1850s the size of the British population of Natal, buoyed by emigration schemes, warranted the establishment of schools to educate the colony's youth, preparing them in many cases for careers in the burgeoning colonial civil service. In 1861, keen to develop sustainable schools on par with those found in Britain, the Natal government established Collegiate Institutions in both Durban and Pietermaritzburg⁴⁸. The work of these institutions proved successful for they led to the establishment of both Maritzburg College and DHS.

Maritzburg College, which was known initially as the Pietermaritzburg High School, was founded on the 2nd of March 1863. Three years later, on the 1st of June 1866, DHS opened its gates to its founding students⁴⁹. For a number of years both schools moved from temporary location to temporary location and struggled to maintain a respectable number of pupils. However, the fortunes of both schools seemed to stabilise with the arrival of their third headmasters and a move to permanent premises. The arrival of Robert Clark at the Maritzburg High School in 1879 and William Nicholas's appointment as headmaster of DHS in 1887 heralded new eras for both schools. Clark and Nicholas, both scholars of Latin, are credited with saving their schools and moulding them along the lines of the elite public schools of the British mainland.

2.2.2 The English public school system.

The English public school can trace its roots back to 1382 and 1440 with the foundation of Winchester College and Eton College respectively⁵⁰. Whilst the founders of these two pioneering schools were some of England's most powerful men, the elite status of the modern English public school only began to emerge in the sixteenth century. Following King Henry VIII's break with Rome in 1533, he sanctioned the dissolution of the monasteries and the

⁴⁵ Edgar Brookes and Colin Webb. *A History of Natal*. (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1965). 35

⁴⁶ See Alan Paton. *Towards the Mountain*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981). 56

⁴⁷ Paul Thompson. *The British Civic Culture of Natal, South Africa, 1902-1961*. (Howick: Brevitas, 1999). 6-7

⁴⁸ Hubert Jennings. *The DHS Story 1866-1966*. (Durban: The Durban High School and Old Boys Memorial Trust, 1966). 19

⁴⁹ Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 24

⁵⁰ Bernard Darwin. *The English Public School*. (London: Longmans, 1929). 4-5

schools attached to them⁵¹. With many Catholic grammar schools falling on difficult times, the English aristocracy turned increasingly to the independent public schools⁵². The conditions and upper class popularity of public schools continued to improve when Thomas Arnold was appointed to head Rugby School in 1828. Arnold sought to build the characters of his boys by introducing Victorian morals into Rugby's educational curriculum and extra-mural activities. His experiment at Rugby influenced other public schools to reform and led to increased demand for the public school system.

Whilst the Victorian public school system flourished across the British Isles, there were also many examples of it being exported to the various British colonies across the world⁵³. This was because most of the officials of the British colonial service were drawn from the old boys' associations of public schools⁵⁴. The role of the public school in the British Empire is evident in the fact that well over half of Kenya's colonial civil servants were old boys of public schools⁵⁵. Thus, when colonial officials began to establish schools they modelled them on the English public school⁵⁶.

Public schools were also started by colonial officials in an attempt to establish a wider British cultural influence, which they hoped would consolidate and improve their political control over their colonial subjects⁵⁷. This is why many of Britain's former colonies boast their own 'Eton'⁵⁸. Egypt has Victoria College, Uganda has Kings College, and Sri Lanka has Trinity College. The Colony of Natal was no different as it had two private (Hilton College and Michaelhouse) and two government (Maritzburg College and DHS) high schools claiming public school status. At Maritzburg College's 1908 prize-giving, the guest speaker, Sir Matthew Nathan gave a speech entitled "Duty of Young Natal". In the speech he highlighted the importance of the English public school model in the administration of the British Empire. His observation of College's public school status and its role in the British Empire were as follows:

"...it is evident the College fulfils satisfactorily one of its purposes, that is, the training of boys' minds. I have no reason to doubt that it carries out its other great function, that of forming their character. Of the two purposes I am inclined to think that in the conditions of this country the second is possibly of a greater importance. The conditions are such that every boy has to learn to be a ruler... hence it is primarily necessary that they should acquire in this college those qualities of fearlessness, patience, broad sympathy, and quiet unassuming strength, which have enabled boys trained in the public schools in England to rule hundreds of millions of natives in Asia and Africa, and to maintain Pax Britannica among them. The authorities of the College,

⁵¹ Randall. *Little England on the Veld*. 2.

⁵² Randall. *Little England on the Veld*. 17

⁵³ Randall. *Little England on the Veld*. 32

⁵⁴ Rich. *Elixir of Empire*. 20

⁵⁵ D. Kennedy. *Islands of White Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987). 43

⁵⁶ Milner Snell. *The Influence of the British Public School System on Natal Education*. (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Honours Thesis, 1992). 2

⁵⁷ Rich. *Elixir of Empire*. 37

⁵⁸ Rich. *Elixir of Empire*. 41-42

I am sure, appreciate the necessity of training the boys so as to acquire these qualities⁵⁹...”

2.2.3 Schools on the Colonial Frontier: Maritzburg College and DHS’ violent environment.

Early into the British occupation of Natal, many of the colonists realised their presence in Natal was vulnerable. For more than seventy years British colonists battled, on and off, their African, and when a large section of the Cape Dutch (Boers) population migrated into Natal in the late 1830s, Boer neighbours in a series of minor skirmishes and major wars. Although the British overcame all of these threats, they occasionally sustained humiliating defeats (most notably at Isandlwana in the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, Majuba in the First South African War and during ‘Black Week’ in the Second South African War) which reminded the English-speaking white population of Natal just how vulnerable their grip on Natal was.

Judging from the early school magazines, the staff and boys of Maritzburg College and DHS were familiar with the plight of the early British settlers in Natal and their subsequent conflicts with their Zulu and Boer neighbours. The Zulu massacre of Boer trekkers along the Bushmans’ River in 1838 was referred to by the headmaster of Maritzburg College, Robert Clark, in a poem which he called “The Lay of Dingaan”. It is also very likely that Clark’s deputy, Rev John Stalker, the first historian of the Royal Natal Carbineers, would have told his pupils the heroic story of College old boys who fought and died during the Langalibalele Rebellion and at Isandhlwana⁶⁰. Similarly, from the outset, the pupils of DHS were aware of the threat posed by Natal’s Zulu neighbours who the first DHS headmaster, Robert Russell, referred to as a “fierce and predatory race”⁶¹. So aware was Russell of the threat posed by the Zulus and the Boers that he established a school cadet corps shortly after assuming the position of headmaster at the new school⁶².

Russell’s comments and actions highlight the fact that teachers at Natal’s public school believed that the position of Natal’s English-speaking white population rested on its ability to defend itself from Boer invasion or African rebellion. This thesis will illustrate that these threats partly inspired teachers like Langley, who had witnessed three of these colonial conflicts first hand, to implement many of the militaristic traditions and practises associated with the English public school system. Another reason why the public school system was energetically implemented by teachers like Langley lay in the belief that the upper and middle class colonists of Natal needed to adopt an educational system that linked them with the upper classes of the British mainland and separated them, both culturally and socially, from the perceived degenerative clutches of the white and African working classes of the colony.

2.4 Masculinity, Biography and Schooling

⁵⁹ MCM. June 1908. 9

⁶⁰ John Stalker. *The Natal Carbineers: the history of the regiment from its foundation, 15th January 1855 to 30th June 1911*. (Pietermaritzburg: P. Davis and Son, 1912).

⁶¹ Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 24

⁶² Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 25

Langley's thick and flowing moustache was admired by his Zulu employees who associated facial hair with masculine vigour⁶³ and who honoured him with the manly praise name 'Madevu', meaning moustache. Measuring six feet with a 38 inch chest⁶⁴, icy blue eyes and a reputation for violence Langley was the poster boy for the Victorian physical ideal. Langley's character also bared the contradictions often associated with upper-class Victorian masculinity. Langley had an artistic and sensitive side which was responsible for his love of painting. This side of his character saw him openly weep when reading DHS's roll of honour during the First World War⁶⁵.

Taking the contradictory physical and sensitive aspects of Langley's masculine character into consideration, I thought it appropriate to use the prism of masculinity through which to view Langley and his educational ideology. The gendered concept of masculinity allows the biographical scholar to gain a greater insight into the personality and actions of the individual by considering these in relation to the society's gendered norms as well as to the trajectory of the individual's own life.

This thesis draws on a well-developed body of scholarship on gender, men and specifically on work on masculinity, education and empire. These academics have rejected 'the sex role theory' put forward by Robert Brannon and Deborah David which sees all men as practitioners of a stoical, physically violent and power hungry form of masculinity⁶⁶. Instead, scholars like Raewyn Connell have argued that there are multiple masculinities and that the development, dominance and evolving nature of specific masculine codes are worthy of further investigation⁶⁷. This sentiment is echoed and summarised well by Michael Kimmel when he says that "masculinity means different things to different groups of men at different times ... Men's experiences depend on class, race, ethnicity, age, region of the country and location in the global economy⁶⁸." Stephen Whitehead and Frank Barrett have even gone as far as to say that "today there are no areas of men's activities that have not been subject to some research and debate by both women and men⁶⁹." The English public school system and its colonial copies are no exception.

There are a number of historians who have conducted research into the formation of masculinity under the English public school system, four of whom have added significantly to my understanding of Langley and his educational philosophy. British historian John Tosh has written extensively on the topic of upper and middle class masculinity Victorian Britain, specifically its role in expanding the British Empire. From 1995 to 2005 Tosh wrote a series of publications in which he outlined the role of the English public school system in promoting a masculine code that was physically and mentally capable of expanding and

⁶³ Ian Knight. *Zulu Rising: The Epic Story of iSandlwana and Rorke's Drift*. (London: Macmillan, 2010).

⁶⁴ Natal Carbineers Muster Roll

⁶⁵ Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 121

⁶⁶ Deborah Sarah David and Robert Brannon. eds. *The forty-nine percent majority: The male sex role*. (Addison: Wesley Publishing Company, 1976).

⁶⁷ RW Connell. *Masculinities*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

⁶⁸ Michael S Kimmel and Jacqueline Zuzann Holler. *The gendered society*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). 338

⁶⁹ Stephen Whitehead and Frank Barrett, eds. *The masculinities Reader*. (Oxford: Polity, 2001). 1

maintaining the British Empire⁷⁰. In these publications, Tosh illustrates how, from the 1850s to just after the First World War, public schools developed a system aimed at inculcating a “manly self-reliance in boys who had been raised in comfortable conditions of domesticity⁷¹.” Tosh’s research has also shown how the popularisation of a specific masculine code enabled this masculine code to become hegemonic. In his article *A Fresh Access of Dignity: Masculinity and Imperial Commitment in Britain, 1815-1914*, Tosh describes how the popular image of the public school hero inspired by *Tom Brown’s School Days* and countless other swashbuckling imperial literary romances helped entrench the masculine model of English public schools in nineteenth and early twentieth century British society, engendering both acceptance and emulation of this aggressive and elitist form of manliness.

Similarly, historians operating out of Britain’s former colonies have also added to the narrative of masculinity and the English public school system’s cultivation of a specific masculine code. Jock Phillips, Robert Morrell, and John Lambert are three of the commonwealth historians extensively consulted by this thesis. Jock Phillips has conducted extensive research into the masculine code cultivated by the white colonial hierarchy of New Zealand. In his 1996 Kiwi epic- *A man’s country?: The image of the pakeha male, a history*⁷²- Phillips explores the context, formation and expression of a stoical and physically aggressive form of masculinity amongst white New Zealanders during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His observations on the role of New Zealand’s ‘public schools’ in shaping and promoting this hardy masculinity will inform this thesis’s explanation of Langley and his interpretation of public school masculinity.

Closer to home, South African historians such as John Lambert and Robert Morrell have delved into colonial settler masculinities and the institutions that helped develop them. In 2004 Lambert eloquently argued that the structure and curriculum of South Africa’s ‘public schools’ served to encourage a militaristic patriotism that indirectly led hundreds of young colonists to their deaths during the First World War⁷³. Morrell’s ground breaking work *From Boys to Gentlemen: Settler Masculinity in Colonial Natal 1880-1920* is of particular interest to my proposed thesis as it specifically highlights Natal. His book covers the role played by schools, clubs, sport, local regiments, etc in shaping the youth of the colony’s understanding

⁷⁰ John Tosh. “Imperial Masculinity and the Flight from Domesticity in Britain 1880-1914.” *Gender and colonialism*. (1995).

A Man’s Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999),

Masculinities in Politics in War: Gendering Modern History. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004),

“A Fresh Access of Dignity: Masculinity and Imperial Commitment in Britain, 1815-1914” in *History and African Studies Seminar*. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa, 1999,

Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire. (London: Longman, 2005), and

“Masculinities in an industrialising Society: Britain, 1800-1914.” *Journal of British Studies*. (44: April 2005).

⁷¹ John Tosh. *A Man’s Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999). 2-4

⁷² Jock Phillips. *A man’s country?: The image of the pakeha male, a history*. (Auckland: Penguin Group New Zealand, 1987).

⁷³ Lambert, John. “‘Munition Factories... Turning Out a Constant Supply of Living Material’: White South African Elite Boys’ Schools and the First World War.” *South African Historical Journal* (51: 1, 2004).

of what it means to be a man. In this sense, Morrell uses masculinity and its construction as a prism through which much of Natal's colonial history can be explained. This thesis' critical examination of Langley will draw on the techniques pioneered by the historians above and attempt to shed new light on Langley's personality and educational ideology.

2.5 Classic Curriculum: the rationale behind and results of DHS's academic content.

The curriculum Langley promoted at DHS is an important window into Langley's mentality and the way in which he implemented the public school system in Natal. Langley's academic philosophy was centred on the classics. He defended subjects like Latin and ridiculed schools who had adopted a more practical curriculum. In order to understand Langley's obsession with and defence of this outdated curriculum I have primarily consulted the honours thesis of Frances Hope Jones. Her honours thesis, *Tirocinium Imperii: Public School Education in the Victorian Era, the Classical Curriculum, and the British Imperial Ethos*⁷⁴, is rather unique as I have so far failed to locate a text so specifically centred on school classicism. Unlike previous works I have studied, eg: C.W Valentine's *Latin and its Place and Value in Education* (1935) and W.H Jones' *Via Nova* (1915), Francis Jones' thesis provides a comprehensive and balanced account of the rationale behind the classical curriculum's adoption by elite public schools and its longevity in the face of mounting criticism.

In her thesis, Frances Jones highlights four reasons why public schools adopted a classics-heavy curriculum and clung to it well into the twentieth century despite mounting criticism. According to *Tirocinium Imperii*, the heads of public schools and the parents who invested in them valued the mental stamina, imperial lessons, imperial opportunity and status subjects like Latin conferred upon students. Jones argues that because Latin was most often taught through repetitive rote memorisation, supporters of Latin highlighted the mental stamina that students of Latin would develop. She also explains that leading members of the British establishment promoted classical education as it exposed students to ancient Greek and Roman literature. Because Ancient Greek and Roman Literature was filled with tales of war, courage and empire, the British educational hierarchy believed that students would develop a taste for the British Empire. They also believed that students would heed examples of the fallen empires of ancient Greece and Rome and enlist themselves into the expansion and defence of the British Empire. Lastly Jones argues that the longevity of the classical curriculum was due to the status and position it conferred upon students. According to Jones, knowledge of Latin and classic literature immediately marked an individual as a member of the upper classes. She also explains that, along with being able to hold their own during dinner party conversation, students with classical tutelage were at an advantage because certain sought-after occupations were reserved for candidates with a classical background. These three factors indicate why schools and parents were keen to preserve the classic flavour of elite education despite criticism of its modern impracticality.

2.6 Athleticism and the public school.

⁷⁴ Frances Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii: Public School Education in the Victorian Era, the Classical Curriculum, and the British Imperial Ethos*. (Unpublished Dissertation: Wesleyan University, 2008).

As Langley is most often associated with his promotion of rugby in Natal it only seems fitting that his biography should contain a chapter on his sporting philosophy. Whilst most readers may see sport, especially school sport, as a trivial subject worthy of only fleeting mention in an academic study, historians throughout the world have highlighted the fact that an in-depth investigation into sport, along with other pastimes, provide us with essential windows into societies of the past. In the field of masculinity, numerous historians have conducted research into the role of sport in the construction of particular masculine codes. More specifically, as relating to this thesis, historians operating out of former British colonies such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the West Indies have shown a particular interest in the proliferation of public school sports; such as rugby, cricket and athletics; and the role of these sports in the production of masculinity⁷⁵. Authors such as Murray Phillips and Jock Phillips have even gone as far as to argue that these sports were an important factor in New Zealand and Australian men's eagerness to volunteer for war.

One of the most prolific and influential scholars on the topic of public school sport is Tony (J. A) Mangan, whose work in the field of sports' history has inspired a generation of historians and social scientists across the globe. His pioneering accounts of the role of British athleticism in the imperial mission showed how team sports (especially rugby and cricket) spread across the empire. Mangan also illustrated how sport can be a window into the construction of hegemony, cultural assimilation, and the ways in which the British establishment used sport for social engineering⁷⁶.

2.7 The public school system's non-academic curriculum:

An important aspect of Langley's story is his promotion and/or acceptance of traditions, structures and practices, often derogatory and/or abusive in nature, that fall outside the academic and sporting curriculum. Langley's promotion and acceptance of the public school traditions of corporal punishment, domestic privation, and schoolboy hierarchy and government are rich testimony of the type of masculinity that Langley personalised and sought to entrench at his school.

Many British historians and sociologists have conducted research into the 'covert curriculum' of the English public school system. Modern scholars such as JR de S Honey⁷⁷, John Chandos⁷⁸, Paul Rich⁷⁹, Rupert Wilkinson⁸⁰, Geoffrey Best⁸¹, Christopher Otley⁸², Peter

⁷⁵ David Brown. "Social Darwinism, Private Schooling and Sport in Victorian and Edwardian Canada", Brian Stoddart. "Cricket and Colonialism in the English-Speaking Caribbean to 1914: Towards a Cultural Analysis", John Daly. "A New Britannia in the Antipodes: Sport, Class and Community in Colonial South Australia" in *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad 1700-1914*. ed. James Mangan. (London: Frank Cass, 1988),

Murray Phillips. "Football, Class and War: The Rugby Codes in New South Wales, 1907-1918", Jock Phillips. "The Hard Man: Rugby and the Formation of Male Identity in New Zealand" in *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity*. eds. John Nauright and Timothy Chandler. (London: Frank Cass, 1996),

⁷⁶ James Mangan, ed *Making imperial mentalities: socialisation and British imperialism*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990) and *The cultural bond: sport, empire, society*. (London: Psychology Press, 1992).

⁷⁷ JR de S Honey. *Tom Brown's universe: the development of the English public school in the nineteenth century*. (Quadrangle, 1977).

⁷⁸ John Chandos. *Boys Together: English Public School, 1800-64*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

Parker⁸³, and Anthony Seldon and David Walsh⁸⁴ have looked to the effects of this curriculum and have provided valuable insights into the outcomes of these public school structures. These historians have argued that these structures often resulted in public schoolboys becoming accustomed to and, in some cases, enthusiastic participants in the British Imperial project. Some of these scholars have even suggested that these structures militarised public schoolboys and were partly responsible for the exceptionally high casualty rate of public school old boys in the First World War. More locally- historians such as Peter Randall⁸⁵, Paul Thompson⁸⁶ and Robert Morrell⁸⁷ have looked into the contextual development and rugged outcomes of the ‘covert curriculums’ of South Africa’s public schools.

2.7 Alternate views of Langley and internal resistance to his educational philosophy

In order to investigate the role of Langley in the construction of a specific masculine code, I have employed the theories developed by historians such as E. P Thompson and Carlo Ginzburg. E. P. Thompson’s book, *The Making of the English Working Class*, and its theory of approaching ‘history from below’ illustrates that a well-rounded study of the dominant masculinity being produced under a headmaster like Langley demands that I look into the experiences of the boys who did not conform to this strand of masculinity⁸⁸. Langley’s critics have always mentioned his harsh treatment of boys who did not fit or rebelled against the sporting character that he instilled at his school. Generally, schools following the ‘public school model’ have come under similar criticism. The school lives of these artistic or unsporting types were rather bleak and punctuated by bullying and ostracism. Unfortunately, because of their low school status, the tormented voices of these individuals were excluded, often purposefully, from school related sources and this has made it extremely difficult for historians to document their schooling experience. However, in the case of Langley and DHS, a number of Langley’s unsporting boys reached prominence in their adulthood and thus their voices and school experiences were documented for prosperity in various biographies and memoirs. The voices of these boys are extremely important as they provide us with alternative sources on Langley and his mission to mould the masculinities of the young men

⁷⁹ Paul Rich. *Elixir of Empire: The English Public Schools, Ritualism, Freemasonry, and Imperialism*. (London: Regency Press, 1989).

⁸⁰ Rupert Wilkinson. *The Prefects: British Leadership and the Public School Tradition*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1964).

⁸¹ Geoffrey Best. “Militarism and the Victorian public school”. *The Victorian Public School*. eds. Brian Simon and Ian Bradley. (London: Gill and Macmillan, 1975).

⁸² Christopher Otley. “Militarization in the Public Schools, 1900-1972”. *The British Journal of Sociology*. (1978, 29: 3).

⁸³ Peter Parker. *The Old Lie: The Great War and the Public School Ethos*. (London: Constable and Company Limited, 1987).

⁸⁴ Anthony Seldon and David Walsh. *Public School and The Great War: The Generation Lost*. (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Military, 2013).

⁸⁵ Peter Randall. *Little England On The Veld: The English Private School System in South Africa*. (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1982).

⁸⁶ Paul Thompson. *The British Civic Culture of Natal South Africa: 1902-1961*. (Howick: Brevitas, 1961).

⁸⁷ Robert Morrell. *From Boys to Gentlemen: Settler Masculinity in Colonial Natal 1880-1920*. (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2001) and “Masculinity and the White Boys’ Boarding Schools of Natal, 1880-1930”. *Perspectives in Education* (15: 1, 1993).

⁸⁸ E. P. Thompson. *The Making of the English Working Class*. (New York: Random House, 1966).

he taught. Along with helping me create a holistic account of Langley's life, their voices will highlight the internal resistance to Langley's educational philosophy.

Chapter 3:

Elitism, ambition, mental stamina and empire: coming to grips with the rationale behind Langley's classical curriculum.

“The Tech is the place for swine like you!”

A phrase often used by Langley when criticising behaviour unbecoming of his classically trained DHS boys

In his memoirs, Langley claimed that around the time of his taking over the headmastership of DHS in 1910 “modern ideas of education launched themselves full tilt at the established order of things, and the old head [his predecessor, W.H Nicolas] went away convinced that the end of all things had arrived. He sorrowfully wagged his head at the probable abandonment of Latin. But Latin came to stay for another twenty years...⁸⁹”

As the above passage makes evident, classical subjects were essential elements in Langley's educational philosophy. This chapter analyses Langley's mission to promote the classics at DHS, the criticisms levelled at this mission and his response to these criticisms. In doing so, this chapter highlights aspects of the masculinity Langley was attempting to foster at DHS by

⁸⁹ Aubrey Samuel Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 23

uncovering the impact (actual and perceived) his curriculum had on the masculine character of his students and the educational system of Natal as a whole.

Although not the sole saviour of the classical curriculum as he would lead us to believe, Langley's criticism of his predecessor, W.H Nicolas, highlights the fact that his implementation of a classical curriculum at DHS was not without its critics. In fact that curriculum with a predominately classical flavour had been under attack both in Natal and in British Isles for half a century before Langley took over the reins at DHS.

As early as the mid nineteenth century, critics of classical study stressed the impracticality of learning ancient languages and literature⁹⁰. In 1864 the British government established the Taunton Commission as part of a plan for centralized control over those public schools not included in the Great Nine. The commission was tasked with looking into the effects of proposed parliamentary control of the schools. In particular, the commission investigated the benefits of the implementation of a national exam system and the adoption of a more scientific curriculum⁹¹.

Considering the fact that the Colony of Natal was a predominately rural environment in the late nineteenth century and the fact that most of her white people were engaged in agricultural and commercial pursuits, it is not surprising that a similar debate occurred in the colony. The debate surrounding the future of government aided secondary schools in Natal, their curriculum and their longevity seems to have had its origins in the waning numbers of boys attending Natal's government high schools. In the early 1880s the number of students attending Natal's government high schools, DHS and Pietermaritzburg High School (later Maritzburg College), painted a poor picture of the colonial government's secondary schools with only 46 pupils enrolled at both schools. As a result of these figures, members of the public and the colony's Council of Education began to level accusations of incompetence at the then headmaster of DHS, P Sandford, the curriculum of the high schools, and the worth of these schools in light of their poor attendance and their cost to the taxpayer. Many of these critics, the Superintending-Inspector of Education Robert Russell included, highlighted the increasing enrolment numbers at the colonial government's primary schools as evidence of the superfluous position of the colony's high schools.

On the 7th of December 1882 the Governor of Natal, Sir Henry Bulwer- in response to the battle raging between Natal's Council of Education and the headmasters of DHS and Pietermaritzburg High School- established a commission of enquiry to assess the state of secondary education in the colony. In February the following year the commission filed a report which claimed that DHS "provided a form of education which the majority of the inhabitants considered was not practically useful for the positions in life most of them would occupy." This sentiment is echoed by Jennings who claimed that in the early 1880s, "95% of the parents in Natal believed that when a boy had Mr Russell's 'pass' (a primary school pass) in his hand he was 'educated', and those who sent their children to a high school were either

⁹⁰ Francis Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii: Public School Education in the Victorian Era, the Classical Curriculum, and the British Imperial Ethos.* (Wesleyan University: Unpublished Honours Thesis, 2008). 4-5

⁹¹ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 18

snobs or fools⁹².” Mr Russell’s practical educational theories and belief that his vocational argument was winning over the headmasters of DHS and Pietermaritzburg High School are evident in his Superintendent’s report of 1886. In this report he wrote,

“I am glad to notice a disposition on the part of both Head Masters to devote more attention throughout to what are called the ‘ordinary’ subjects. As most of our youths have to make their living in the Colony, their education ought to furnish them with the tools and weapons necessary for the work and battle of life...⁹³”

Russell’s words echo the predominant views of the age regarding the empire and the type of man needed to defend and administer the empire. After the British Army was handed humiliating defeats by the Zulus, Boers, Afghans, and Sudanese during the period 1879-1885 Social Darwinists began prophesising the degeneration of British masculinity. They identified a number of causes including the unsuitability of a classical curriculum. Britons began to see energy, physicality, and ruthlessness as essential elements in a rejuvenation of imperial manhood and developed a vision of manliness and character traits that they believed were necessary to develop the British race in order to defeat internal and external threats that faced the empire⁹⁴. Taking these concerns into consideration, one can understand why Russell and a large section of Natal’s settler community thought highbrow classical study a waste of time and not in line with the masculine demands of frontier life.

However, what Russell and his practical supporters did not account for was the classical resilience of Maritzburg College’s Robert Clark and the promotion of W.H Nicholas at DHS. When Nicholas assumed the position of headmaster of DHS in 1887 after P. Sandford failed to return from his holiday in Britain, he was immediately aware of the unpopularity of his cherished classics.

"Natal people, unfortunately, were too inclined to think that the practicalities, the ability to cast up a column of figures or write a sentence – were all that counted, and that the world of the humanities is sentimental rubbish⁹⁵.”

Although Nicholas successfully steered DHS through this trying period and went on to establish DHS as an institution with a reputation for producing some of South Africa’s most promising academics, the fear that the days of the classical curriculum were numbered and that DHS would eventually adopt a more practical curriculum haunted his final days at DHS in 1909. Nicholas wrote that “he could die content” when, to his great relief, he heard that his successor (A.S Langley) “was an even worse fanatic on the subject of Latin than he had been⁹⁶.”

⁹² Hubert Jennings. *The DHS Story 1866-1966*. (Durban: The Durban High School and Old Boys Memorial Trust, 1966). 51

⁹³ Robert Russell. *Report of Superintendent Inspector of Schools*. (1886). 7

⁹⁴ Madhudaya Sinha. *Masculinity Under Siege: Gender, Empire, and Knowledge in Late Victorian Literature*. (Unpublished Dissertation: University of Cincinnati, 2009). 6

⁹⁵ Jennings. *DHS Story*. 81

⁹⁶ Jennings. *DHS Story*. 84

Langley's relationship with classics began in the small Natal hamlet of York at the school attached to the Methodist church his father presided over. Langley's father, Reverend James Langley, was a 'fire and brimstone' preacher who, according to Langley family legend "ranted against the proposal that the railway line should come to York. He apparently called it 'the work of the devil'. As a result, the rail went to Greytown [a settlement nearby] instead, and York died while Greytown flourished"⁹⁷. Langley's relationship with his father seems to have been extremely strained. His memoirs note Rev Langley's frequent absence and his oppressive religious views⁹⁸. In fact, Langley only positively mentions his father on two separate occasions. The first positive story concerns an episode in which Rev Langley illegally requisitioned ammunition during the threat of Zulu incursions into Natal following the Zulu victory at Isandlwana. The second and last positive story, probably the most relevant to this chapter, concerns Reverend Langley's decision to teach his son Latin, Hebrew and ancient Greek.

Langley's study of the classics continued when he was shipped off to Kingswood School in Bath, a school set up to educate the sons of Methodist ministers, in 1884⁹⁹. Although Langley's strongest school subject was drawing, having won a government prize for drawing in 1885 and a senior drawing prize in 1887¹⁰⁰, his passion for classics saw him successfully complete a Bachelor of Arts Degree via correspondence with the University of the Cape of Good Hope in the late 1890s under the tutelage of Maritzburg College's classics obsessed headmaster, Robert Clark.

As a trained classicist, Langley absorbed the fears, prejudices and assumptions of those classicists who were conscious of the practical arguments that threatened their dominance over academia. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Francis Hope Jones' honours' dissertation *Tirocinium Imperii: Public School Education in the Victorian Era, the Classical Curriculum, and the British Imperial Ethos* provides great insight into the fears, prejudices and assumptions of Victorian and Edwardian classicists. Her work has been essential in unravelling the complex rationale behind Langley's obsession with and promotion of the classics. Jones' thesis highlights four benefits public school masters like Langley perceived in a classics curriculum: social status, character and mental stamina, opportunities in the diplomatic and legal services, and imperial spirit. English public school masters believed that a classics based curriculum bestowed elite social status upon students. John Locke in his *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) and Christopher Stray, a Fellow at the University of Swansea in Wales and an expert on the evolution of classical curriculum, both asserted that students subject to a classical curriculum were automatically inducted into the upper echelons of the British social hierarchy¹⁰¹.

The allure of classics continued into the twentieth century because the curriculum possessed the possibility for class affirmation and social mobility. Instead of the academic benefit the

⁹⁷ Correspondence with Jean Thomassen (Great granddaughter of RD Clark and grandniece of ASL) 30 October 2013

⁹⁸ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 9

⁹⁹ Register of Kingswood School, 1748-1922 (1923). 107

¹⁰⁰ The Kingswood Magazine. September 1885. 21 and August 1887. 14

¹⁰¹ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 4

subjects themselves imparted to the students who studied them, the belief was that the subjects elevated social rank and were in effect a form of conspicuous social and education consumption. According to Françoise Waquet this is why Eton, arguably England's most prestigious and elitist school, ensured that 26 masters out of a total of 31 were wholly devoted to teaching the classics in the 1860s. The relationship between Eton, elitism and the classics continued into the twentieth century for in 1905 half of Eton's academic staff were practitioners of the classics¹⁰².

Jones argues that the logic behind the link between a classical education and high social standing relates to Latin's apparent lack of practical application. This impracticality greatly enhanced its prestige, as only the wealthy could afford to engage in studies that did not offer students practical skills that they could use in future commercial and technical occupations. According to Jones:

"...even in the nineteenth century, there were Victorian critics of classical study who often stressed the impracticality of learning the ancient languages. It is likely, however, that this very impracticality held a dual appeal for the elite schools. First, it may have been understood that a language requiring rigorous study yet yielding no pragmatic value must have been character building. Second, the classics were cherished by virtue of their impracticality directly in regard to class: it is often considered a luxury to devote oneself to a study offering no direct financial or occupational benefits¹⁰³."

Jones draws on the findings of the Clarendon Commission, the commission established to investigate complaints against some of the England's leading school, to support her case. It concluded:

"[Conservatives] value [the classics and mathematics] for their own sake, and perhaps even more for the value at present assigned to them in English society. They have nothing to look to but education to keep their sons on high social level. And they would not wish to have what might be more readily converted into money, if in any degree it tended to let their children sink in the social scale¹⁰⁴."

Using this logic, many Upper- middle-class families might have felt a strong incentive to have their sons schooled in ancient languages as this education ensured that boys would associate and be able to communicate with, and secure a position in, the upper echelons of British social hierarchy¹⁰⁵. Jones claims that social climbers and imperial planners alike were aware of the fact that across the Empire public school boys were learning the same grammatical rules and reading the same texts and that this classical uniformity would have provided a common bond between former students when they met at imperial posts abroad¹⁰⁶. John Tosh echoes Jones' claims, saying that the middle class saw public schools and the classical curriculum as means to climb the social ladder and lay claim to the positions and

¹⁰² Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 24

¹⁰³ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 4-5

¹⁰⁴ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 32-33

¹⁰⁵ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 32-33

¹⁰⁶ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 48-49

opportunities associated with gentleman status. Tosh highlights the social aspirations of socially mobile middle class families:

“Their motives were mixed. Some may have believed the claim of the schools to offer a godly education. Others regarded boarding schools as the best antidote to the effeminizing charms of the bourgeois home presided over by the ‘angel mother’. But social and educational advantages probably loomed largest. Apart from hob-nobbing with the sons of the gentry, that meant qualifying for university, securing an army commission, or winning a place in the coveted Indian Civil Service by examination. Ultimately the middle class took its place in the imperial sun by assimilating the values of the landed class. Their sons became ‘gentlemen’, with the imperial opportunities and awareness that the term implied¹⁰⁷.”

Tosh shows that between 1820 and 1870 over sixty schools with a classically based curriculum emerged to claim elite public school status. Yet this expansion was not the result of an attempt to cater for aristocratic demand for schooling. So of the 4000 to 5000 school-leavers these schools turned out every year, Tosh estimates that the gentry must have accounted for under a half and that the balance was made up of the children of ambitious middle class parents¹⁰⁸.

The ability to dye one’s wool in the colours of the upper classes was not lost upon the Britain’s colonial cousins, the vast majority of whose ancestors had migrated to the colonies to escape a life of poverty and urban squalor in the United Kingdom. Many of these colonists, now wealthy landowners who lorded over indigenous peoples, sought to entrench their new-found upper class status by sending their sons to schools resembling the elite public schools of England. This is why, rather than offer subjects that met the vocational needs of an empire on the cusp of industrial and technical innovation, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries public schools across the empire saw a rise in elitism and a revival of a classics heavy curriculum¹⁰⁹. This trend is evident in Françoise Waquet’s observation that instead of a decline in classics in response to eighteenth-century practical opposition, there was “a substantial humanist revival: the ancient languages were honoured everywhere, and everywhere they were the distinguishing mark of educational establishments for the elite¹¹⁰.”

This trend is also evident in Natal where the four main single sex governmental and private ‘public schools’ (Maritzburg College, DHS, Hilton College and Michaelhouse), despite being criticised by segments of the white population for not equipping boys with the practical abilities needed by a vulnerable empire, provided a means for Old Natal Families to highlight their ‘gentry’ status and for Natal’s upwardly mobile white settler population to gain entry

¹⁰⁷ John Tosh. “‘A Fresh Access of Dignity’: Masculinity and Imperial Commitment in Britain, 1815-1914”. In *History and African Studies Seminar*. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa, 1999. 5-6

¹⁰⁸ Tosh. “A Fresh Access of Dignity”. 5-6

¹⁰⁹ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 21

¹¹⁰ Françoise Waquet. *Latin of the Empire of a Sign: From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries*, trans. John Howe (London: Verso, 2001).

into this elite circle through classical study¹¹¹. Langley, like many of his colleagues, understood this desire and, despite all his talk about accepting boys of all classes (he most likely meant religious creeds)¹¹², moulded and marketed his school as an institution that would produce the leadership and elite of the colony.

Langley seems to have seen his school as an institution for higher education, and a place where boys prepared for the Cape examinations and further education at local and British universities. According to Langley, the educational department of Natal “was in the hands of primary (education) men” and as a result they misunderstood the purpose of high schools and “the public school ideal.” This misunderstanding, he claimed, “brought about needless crises on several occasions¹¹³.” He believed that high schools, especially those moulded on the English public school system, were meant to teach classical curriculum. It seems as if Langley regarded technical education as primary in nature and only fit for primary school students, the working class, and Africans. He seems to have seen the white boys who he taught at both College and DHS as the future governing class of the colony. He believed that technical and monetary aspects of commerce and industry were beneath them.

This elitist contempt for a more practical and mercantile curriculum is evident in the Headmaster’s address he delivered in 1913 at DHS’ speech day. In his address Langley said the government’s efforts to make education cheap and therefore more accessible has led to a general drop in the level of education. He then went on to say that this drop led many a despondent parent to prematurely remove their children from school, which he claimed was an even greater travesty. According to his speech day address, Langley stressed that South Africa was in dire need of educated men to lead her and those young men who have received substandard education or who have had their studies prematurely cut are likely to be “pitched into store or office...destined to be nothing more than a subordinate.” On the other hand, Langley said that “all public school boys should be placed in such a position educationally that they can climb if ambition calls¹¹⁴.” This highlights Langley’s elitism and his belief that his ‘public school boys’ were destined for the highest offices of the South African and colonial services.

The elitist messages that permeate Langley’s speeches and classical curriculum were passed on to the pupils who attended DHS or the other elite boys’ schools of Natal. The pupils’ adoption of this elitist mantle is evident in the reminiscences of Q. E. Carter, a boy who enrolled at College in 1917. His memoirs record the fact that he and his College friends would often refer to: “low class fellows... not attending College, Hilton, Michaelhouse or Durban High School as ‘Borvers’¹¹⁵.” Although I do not know what the term “Borvers” means, we can assume that it is a derogatory label attached by these snobbish boys to boys who attended schools they regarded as socially inferior. So entrenched was this elitist mentality that it survived the World Wars and is still evident in an interview I conducted with

¹¹¹ Robert Morrell. “Masculinity and the white boys’ boarding schools of Natal, 1880-1930”. *Perspectives in Education*. (1994). 6-8

¹¹² Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 25

¹¹³ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 25

¹¹⁴ DHS Magazine. March 1914. 4

¹¹⁵ Q. E. Carter. *The Book of College according to Q.E.*

Major Peter Gordon in 2011. Major Gordon, who passed away two years after the interview, recalled feeling very proud walking down the street in his College Blazer and Straw Basher. He even went as far as to say: “Oh ja, you felt you were part of the scene. There were a few commercial sort of schools around, but you felt superior to those¹¹⁶.” Like these boys, Langley did not see DHS or Maritzburg College as government schools which he claimed were “staffed by imported trans-Berg bilingualists, whose pronunciation of English is a byword and worthy of all damnation¹¹⁷.”

Langley’s contempt for vocational based training and technical education of Natal’s other government schools is evident in his criticism of his friend Dr Sam Campbell’s Technical College and Day Continuation School for Boys (now known as Glenwood High School and often referred to by Langley as “the Tech”). These institutes, opened in 1907 and 1910 respectively, offered students a number of technical subjects that would provide them with the knowledge and skills to enter the commercial, industrial and agricultural vocations that characterized the expanding colony at the time¹¹⁸.

Although he referred to Dr Campbell as a brilliant surgeon, he described Dr Campbell’s Technical College as the “maggot of his brain¹¹⁹.” Langley seems to have thought that technical education, in the form offered by Dr Campbell’s institutions, was a direct threat to his cherished classic curriculum. This view is evident in his memoirs when he claims that DHS and Dr Campbell’s institutions (The Durban Technical College and Glenwood High School) “entered into combat¹²⁰.” Langley believed that the sole objective of these institutes was to undermine and destroy DHS: “if I said that the Tech teams were originally trained and fanaticised on a diet of hatred for the D.H.S, it should not be far wrong...¹²¹,”

He saw these institutes as inferior to DHS in the moral education they provided. His memoirs are full of references to the superiority of the moral values imparted by DHS to its students. In his memoirs Langley suspects that umpires and referees loyal to the Technical College, Glenwood high school and the railways would make “partisan” calls against DHS and DHS Old Boys teams on the cricket pitch and rugby field¹²². According to Langley, these ‘cheating’ players and referees were more suited to the game of soccer¹²³, a game Langley thought fit for the working class, Indians and Africans. He would often chastise students that displeased him by calling them ‘technical soccerites’¹²⁴. According to DHS’ biographer, Hubert Jennings, Langley would often cane boys saying “The Tech is the place for swine like you!”

¹¹⁶ Interview with Major Peter Gordon conducted by Dylan Löser, Diepriver, Capetown, 7th May 2011.

¹¹⁷ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 14

¹¹⁸ Wyn Rees. *Natal Technical College 1907-1957: A Jubilee History*. (Durban: University of Natal Press, 1957).

¹¹⁹ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 22

¹²⁰ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 22

¹²¹ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 26

¹²² Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 26

¹²³ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 26

¹²⁴ Jennings. *The D.H.S Story*. 126

The classics survived the vocationalist onslaughts in the 19th century in part because of the belief that the classics provided moral education of the type promoted by English public school masters like Thomas Arnold (headmaster of Rugby School 1828–1842)¹²⁵. Classical subjects, despite being the butt of numerous jokes and satirical poems, studied half-heartedly in lessons and made excruciatingly boring on occasions by way of constant memorization tasks, nonetheless left a marked impression on the minds and hearts of public schoolboys who studied them. Defenders of the classics argued that this impact would shape the characters of classically trained pupils and thus the retention of classical subjects was in keeping with the Arnoldian ideal of moral education, which saw school as integral in the realm of character development and beyond the mere absorption of practical knowledge. The intellectual and moral benefits of the classics were eloquently summarised by the Rev. E. Coleridge in his reply to the probes of Lord Lyttelton of the Clarendon Commission. In his reply to the commission he stated that:

“[The Eton boy] must have some common places to fall back upon, some classical forms of expression out of Horace or Virgil and other good Latin poets, so as to enable him to grapple with his own ideas¹²⁶.”

British ethics and culture verses utilitarian practicality seem to be at the heart of the debate surrounding the validity of classical subjects. Like Coleridge, educationalists in favour of the retention of the classical flavour of England's public school system seem not to have been particularly concerned that classical subjects did not give students the skills and knowledge required to obtain a job or to succeed in individual commercial or agricultural ventures. Like most supporters of classics, Mr. Wilson of Rugby School, attacked the flaws in the argument of these utilitarian reformers by saying that:

“The cause [of opposition to classical studies] was the modern utilitarian spirit: that same spirit which would fain break down the carved work of our great cathedrals to erect in their place the commodious swimming baths¹²⁷.”

This anti-utilitarian stance was not unique to the British Isles as evident in Langley's acting headmaster's address of 1909 in which he berated boys for prematurely leaving school to take up business or farming:

“for those who stay comes the Matriculation, which opens the door to all the professions, and more than that, gives those who take it and do not intend to proceed further a glimpse of broader fields of literature of which they had no idea before, and also a capacity for appreciating them¹²⁸.”

This anti-utilitarian stance is also evident in the editorial of the September 1917 edition of the DHS magazine. In the editorial the editor, no doubt influenced by Langley's own arguments

¹²⁵ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 21

¹²⁶ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 31

¹²⁷ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 27

¹²⁸ MCM. Dec 1909.

in support of the retention of classical subjects, attacks practical criticisms of DHS's classics heavy curriculum:

“...we would deprecate that view which looks upon education, upon schools and examinations, as glorified workshops for turning out automatons...we deplore the effort being made in this our very modern day to substitute for certain subjects in the school and university curricula other ‘that will be of more use to the scholar in after life’...may we forever be preserved from a system that would gauge all things by the standard of utility, for if you are going to cut out all the superfluities of life you are going to take away all that makes life most worth living¹²⁹.”

Langley imbued his boys with a Wordsworthian romantic ideal that rejected the dominance of utilitarian practically. In a speech he delivered at the DHS speech day in 1913 we can see Langley defending the school's adherence to a curriculum dominated by classical subjects.

“[Y]our farmer is not a worse farmer for being a gentleman of literature, your business man is not a worse business man because he possesses that which will keep his nature from shrivelling up into that of an accountant's clerk, with a horizon bounded by figures and farthings- arrogant in the knowledge that he is an animated multiplication table. The difference between craft and culture must be observed.” Boys with this sort of grounding, Langley went on to claim, will “go out formed in character, equipped with a knowledge of practical responsibility...¹³⁰,”

Langley seems to have feared that South African colonists, farmers especially due to their rural isolation, were in danger of losing touch with British culture and etiquette. As an ardent imperialist, Langley realised that British hegemony relied on a distinction between the colonist and colonised. He argued that if culture of British colonists in South Africa was to deteriorate, they would lose their mystique and their privileged position over their colonial subjects. This fear and his use of this fear to highlight the cultural benefits of classical scholarship is evident in his address to the South African Association for the Advancement of Science on the Functions of Athleticism.

“[T]he strenuous life must be in evidence in South Africa to counteract an evident demoralisation. A scattered population, surrounded by savagery- or by savages who are being taught to forget themselves- and a population which, in country districts, finds the society of its fellows so rare as to offer little encouragement to unnecessary refinement, is bound to make special effort against deterioration¹³¹.”

The cultural aspect of Langley's defence of Latin and other classical subjects which highlighted the character building outcomes of a classical education and their ability to produce men of culture and conversation superior to working class whites and blacks was supplemented by an additional argument put forward by Victorian defenders of classical

¹²⁹ DHS Magazine. September 1917. 2

¹³⁰ DHS Magazine. March 1914. 4-5

¹³¹ MCM. June 1908. 19

studies. These classicists also argued that classical based education also led to "order, discipline, and flexibility of mind"¹³² ..."

Classical subjects such as Latin were held to encourage self-discipline and a sort of 'mental stamina'. These qualities seem to have sprung from the rigid manner in which the classics were taught and tested. School masters teaching Latin and Greek placed a great deal of emphasis on teaching and testing the grammar and syntax of classical languages as opposed to classical history and moral lessons contained in classical literature. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the lower grades of England's public schools solely focused on mastery of Latin and Greek grammar. This strategy was known as the "gerund grind," later defined in the Oxford English Dictionary in the 1890s as the "grammar grind"¹³³. It is no wonder that Richard Ollard, who studied classics at Eton in the 1930s, claimed that schoolboy classics required "parade ground discipline" in order to master the subjects¹³⁴.

The rigid and structured nature of the teaching and examination of these classical subjects imbued public school boys with the self-discipline "that they could apply to the paperwork and menial tasks governmental service abroad might require" and prepared them for the gruelling conditions boys would face in their rugged and hostile imperial postings. It was probably this type of thinking that led the Indian Civil Service to actively recruit "public schoolboy types," at the expense of promising candidates who lacked a public school pedigree¹³⁵.

The 'grammar grind' was also prevalent in the elite schools of Britain's colonies. In the British Caribbean not only was the intellectual reputation of a school made evident by the amount of Latin and Greek that the school taught, but "the sheer volume of classical homework students were assigned at schools like Harrison College (Barbados) and Queens Royal College (Trinidad) illustrates the stamina pupils had in the colonies..."¹³⁶. In Natal, Robert Morrell says that Latin masters relied on rote learning and the cane when teaching their students¹³⁷.

The volume of work covered at Natal's public schools and the belief that this volume improved one's mental stamina is alluded to in Langley's Acting Headmaster's address of 1909 at Maritzburg College. In this address he described the preparation necessary before exams as an arduous hike, one that is full of "slippery places", "steep climbs" and "boulder-strewn"¹³⁸. Langley's use of rote memorisation in promotion of 'mental stamina' is also evident in the stories that Neville Nuttall, a former student and later close teaching colleague

¹³² Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 29

¹³³ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 36

¹³⁴ Richard Ollard. *An English Education: A Perspective of Eton*. (London: Collins, 1982).

¹³⁵ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 50

¹³⁶ E Greenwood. "Between Colonialism and Independence: Eric Williams and the Uses of Classics in Trinidad in the 1950s and 1960s". *A Companion to Classical Receptions*. (38: 98, 2008). 103

¹³⁷ Robert Morrell. "'Synonymous with Gentlemen'? White Farmers, White Schools and Labour Relations on the farms of the Natal Midlands, c1880-1920" in J. Crush and A.H. Jeeves (eds.), *White Farms, Black Workers: The State and Agrarian Change in Southern Africa, 1910-1950* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1997).

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¹³⁸ MCM. December 1909. 7

of Langley's, told his son. Nuttall handed down the following story to his son, Michael Nuttall (the former Bishop of Natal). A young boy raised his hand in Langley's Latin class one day and asked after the meaning of a Latin phrase they were learning. According to Michael's recollection of the story, Langley turned to the boy and said: "never mind what it means my boy, you learn it"¹³⁹.

The classics were also held to develop imperial spirit. This spirit, a sort of character trait in its own right, was the fourth and final benefit Langley and his peers believed an education in the classics bestowed on their students. There is still some debate among historians as to whether the schools deliberately trained boys to become imperialists. Rupert Wilkinson, an expert on the English public schools' internal government, adopts a utilitarian view by asserting that the schools were specifically designed to mould boys into model political servants, representing political institutions that deliberately and directly prepared boys for empire¹⁴⁰. In contrast- Bernard Porter, although fully acknowledging the strong correlation between receiving a public school education and future involvement in empire, argues that nineteenth-century Britons, including public school boys, were simply swept along by an imperial society¹⁴¹. Although this may be the case, Jones argues, quite rightly, "that it is necessary to analyse both the real and imagined consequences of preserving the classical curriculum in relation to maintaining an empire"¹⁴².

The themes running throughout assigned Latin texts compelled schoolboys to become familiar with histories of empire¹⁴³. Boys needed a sound knowledge of the histories of the Roman and Greek empires if they were to comprehend classical texts and, even if they were not assigned deliberately to indoctrinate boys, students would have made subconscious connection between these ancient empires and their own¹⁴⁴. Jones claims that the works of ancient authors such as Aesop, Cato, Terence, Caesar, Sallust, Virgil, Horace, and Ovid often placed these schoolboys in contact with common themes such as "blind patriotism and the glorification of death in battle", themes Jones claims are present in any classical epic¹⁴⁵. Therefore, whether it was intentional or not, an instruction in classical curriculum would acquaint students with ancient Greek militarism and the glory of the ancient Roman Empire, and these would likely have added to the general stream of imperial propaganda schoolboys were exposed to¹⁴⁶.

There is no doubt that Langley was an imperialist and supporter of British global hegemony. His memoirs are full of racist remarks and many of his comments highlight his belief in the superiority and natural ascendancy of the British race. Langley's admiration and support of colonialism in South Africa finds expression in descriptions such as the "bold activities by

¹³⁹ Conversation with Michael Nuttall (2 February 2015).

¹⁴⁰ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 1

¹⁴¹ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 1-2

¹⁴² Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 122

¹⁴³ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 108

¹⁴⁴ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 48-49

¹⁴⁵ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 40-41

¹⁴⁶ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 26

British settlers¹⁴⁷.” His unwavering support for British colonialism in South Africa and its paternal overtones is also evident in the way in which he blames the Zulu War of 1879 on what he calls “Dutch aggression on the one side and the fact that Natal received and protected Zulu refugees¹⁴⁸.”

Langley believed that Africans were inferior, ignorant and superstitious. In his memoirs, Langley claims that all Africans hated fish before Europeans arrived and taught them that fish were not another species of snake¹⁴⁹ and that “the nigger cannot bake bread for nuts¹⁵⁰.” His views were hierarchical with whites as superior and Africans as inferior. The biggest insult he could launch was to accuse a lazy farmer of being “inferior to the nigger¹⁵¹.”

Langley held the paternalistic belief that it was the colonist’s duty to civilise both the soil of Africa and her native inhabitants. This belief is evident when Langley says that along with ploughing, planting, animal husbandry, reaping and making additions to the homestead, “the obligations to the natives filled life [the life of British colonists] with interest¹⁵².” This paternal view of Africans as children who are content with their subordinate role as the serving class is also evident in his memoirs when they describe a country gymkhana he attended. In one passage he describes the “natives” as “a lot of happy children” who “looked after their bosses’ horses, and, if a pony race for them was staged, their cup of joy was full¹⁵³.”

When describing this country gymkhana Langley also shows his contempt for the emerging Afrikaner culture and his belief in the superiority of British culture:

“The British went on with their lawful occasions, which comprised the control and management of the gymkhana. They had the experience and the initiative and took it. The Dutch crowded together, with surly but interested looks that marked their complete emergence two secluded centuries had inflicted on them¹⁵⁴.”

Whilst Langley was dismissive and scathing of Dutch/Afrikaner culture he does impress on readers of his memoirs the belief that these faults can and must be refined and exorcized through the anglicising process of British education and intermarriage. “Thirty years later the writer attended a gymkhana in another part of Natal. Dutch girls, indistinguishable from the British because of education and inter-marriage, were busy with the local ladies, serving the sandwiches and cake¹⁵⁵.” Langley’s patronising belief in the benefits of Anglicisation is evident again when, at the very same gymkhana, he meets “a well-dressed man, who showed no signs of gaucherie (awkward or unsophisticated ways), giving quip for quip... he was introduced to me in the course, and proved to be one of the Natal public school Dutch

¹⁴⁷ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 1

¹⁴⁸ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 1

¹⁴⁹ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 8

¹⁵⁰ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 13

¹⁵¹ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 12

¹⁵² Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 12

¹⁵³ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 18

¹⁵⁴ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 16-18

¹⁵⁵ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 18

products.” What impressed Langley even more was the fact that this ‘Natal public school Dutch product’ was an accomplished fly fisherman. “He was a great improvement on what I saw thirty years before on a trout stream further along the Drakensberg¹⁵⁶” (earlier on in his memoirs he recalls how he impressed a group of Boers who were fishing with worms with his mastery of fly-fishing).

Ancient classical texts helped to familiarise and normalise aggressive imperial expansion in the minds of public schoolboy readers, but also carried messages that strengthened the imperial grip on the colonies. Langley did this by drawing comparisons between the British and Roman Empires, in an attempt to warn pupils about the mistakes that led to the fall of the Roman Empire¹⁵⁷. One of the comparisons pounced upon by comparative classicists like Langley was the extent of the Roman Empire and their failure to recruit enough able bodied Romans to defend it against internal and external threats. These advocates highlighted the fact that, in the years 1870 to 1902, the British Empire expanded to govern 4,750,000 more square miles of new territory and 88 million new subjects¹⁵⁸. This expansion meant that more and more men were required to govern its new colonies and defend its new borders.

In his address to the South African Association for the Advancement of Science on the Functions of Athleticism, Langley raised the notion of the empire’s vulnerability. South African whites, he warns, are “a scattered population, surrounded by savagery...savages who are being taught to forget themselves.” He exhorted white South Africans to overcome this threat “by instilling in the youth... whilst under tuition, prompt and unquestioning obedience¹⁵⁹.”

According to Jones, teachers like Langley and the classical curriculum together played a part in ensuring that the British Empire would rarely have to conscript her men into military or governance roles because there was an adequate voluntary supply¹⁶⁰. Although classical texts (with their militaristic and imperial themes) may not have been prescribed with jingoistic indoctrination in mind, they no doubt contributed to the boys’ overall perception of the British Empire as majestic, natural and as potentially fragile as its Roman predecessor¹⁶¹.

An almost perfect summary of Langley’s use of classic curriculum and its effects on the boys is provided by Roy Campbell, a former pupil of Langley’s who became an internationally famous poet and author. Although he had a low opinion of the DHS curriculum, his comments are insightful.

“[It did] nothing much. It was not the fault of the masters... but of the public school system, which in the Colonies is even more ‘public school’ than in England. It does

¹⁵⁶ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 19

¹⁵⁷ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 45

¹⁵⁸ Robert Johnson. *British Imperialism*. (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). 4

¹⁵⁹ MCM. June 1908. 19

¹⁶⁰ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 65

¹⁶¹ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 122-123

little more than give men a thorough distaste for learning... it turns them loose with nothing but an acquisitive instinct and a few brutal material appetites¹⁶².”

This observation highlights two major consequences of Langley’s belief in the power of teaching classics. Firstly, the classical curriculum was maintained and defended because it supported a rigid colonial race and class hierarchy and provided a pathway for social mobility while prescribing the particular kind of masculinity that was appropriate in the colonial gender order. Secondly, it contributed to the education of a generation of school boys who were unquestioning of and attracted to the violence and material benefits associated with empire.

In conclusion, instead of being oblivious to the practical concerns of the colonists who criticised his classical curriculum, Langley actively sought to highlight both the social, moral and practical benefits of his curriculum. He successfully highlighted the fact that a classically based curriculum, if implemented correctly, could confer on its students the elite status enjoyed by the public school classes of the British mainland, the culture and moral wisdom of the ancients, a mind capable of absorbing and organising vast amounts of information, and a zest for empire and its preservation. In doing this, Langley convinced a large section of Natal’s settler community that the classics would not weaken the manliness of colony as critics of the classics suggested. Instead his arguments showed that the classics would enhance the white masculinity of the colony by ensuring that elite white colonists remained mentally and culturally above their colonial subjects. The athletic aspect of Langley’s educational ideology would ensure Natal’s colonists would be physically capable of the demands of empire.

¹⁶² Roy Campbell. *Broken Record*. (London: Boriswood, 1934). 20

Chapter 4:

Outnumbered and insecure: Langley's insecurities and their athletic remedy

“The common whine, unworthy of our race, that we are an insignificant number amongst hordes of blacks, should keep the detractors of manly exercise in their approved background¹⁶³.”

Langley addresses the South African Association for the Advancement of Science (1908).

As the quote above illustrates, one of Langley's major legacies in Natal was his promotion of team sports such as rugby and cricket. Langley, like many of his contemporaries, saw team sport as a vehicle through which one could promote the muscular Christian masculinity needed to preserve and administer Britain's empire¹⁶⁴. This chapter will highlight how Langley's successful promotion of this athletic side of his educational philosophy has its origins in the general 'crisis of masculinity' that gripped the British Empire in the early twentieth century and, more specifically, in the insecurities Langley developed as a result of the defeats British forces sustained in South Africa. It will also highlight how this aspect of Langley's educational philosophy catered for the practical concerns of those colonists who

¹⁶³ MCM. June 1908.

¹⁶⁴ James Mangan. *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology*. (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000).

stressed the need for men physically capable of developing, administering and defending the British presence in Natal whilst still furthering Langley's mission of producing boys worthy of gentlemanly status.

Even though his major impact was rugby, Langley was an enthusiastic and accomplished all round sportsman. As a cricketer Langley excelled with both the ball and bat. The December 1900 edition of the College Magazine records his bowling average as 10/1 with an average of less than 3 runs being scored against him per over. The same publication records his batting average as 41.1 with a top score of 110¹⁶⁵. Even in his thirties, Langley was putting in man of the match performances. The April 1905 College Magazine records Langley scoring 61 runs and taking 5 wickets for 24 runs against the Natal Police team¹⁶⁶. Similarly, the June 1907 Magazine notes the fact that Langley took a five wicket haul for 47 runs playing for College against the College Old Boys¹⁶⁷.

Along with cricket, Langley enjoyed hunting and was an avid fly fisherman. His holidays were often spent fishing, hunting and painting in the Natal Drakensberg. These pursuits seem to stem from his rural upbringing in York. In his memoirs, Langley describes his childhood of hunting, fishing and riding as "lots of healthy excitement." His belief in the physical benefits of outdoor sports is evident in his memoirs when he says that a fortnight of this lifestyle "beat all the sanatoria in the world"¹⁶⁸.

Whilst Langley enjoyed all of these pastimes, his achievements and contributions to the game of Rugby football, particularly in Natal, won him both fame and notoriety and seem to have occupied a special place in his heart and within his educational philosophy. Langley was first introduced to the game of rugby as a school boy at Kingswood School in 1884. Although he seems to have been a decent student athlete, he does not seem to have played for the Kingswood first rugby team. The College Magazine of December 1908 refers to this fact in a biographical article on Langley. According to the article, Langley "early showed promise of being an excellent athlete, but owing to the system of marking in vogue at the school (any pupil failing to get a certain percentage of marks being "gated") Langley failed to get his team colours"¹⁶⁹. Despite this scandalous fact, Langley is recorded as having played for the second team in 1885 at the age of 14. Considering the fact that he was at Kingswood for another 2 years, I think it reasonable to assume that, had he been more academically diligent, he would have played for the first team¹⁷⁰.

After school- whilst occupying junior housemaster roles at Duke House School, Trowbridge; Victoria College, Congleton; and Haversham Grammar School- Langley continued playing rugby. In 1893, whilst working at Haversham, he was asked to captain the Kendal Town rugby team. During the three years that followed, 1883-4-5, Langley played regularly for Westmoreland County at centre three-quarter [first centre, in modern positional terms]. In

¹⁶⁵ MCM. December 1900. 44

¹⁶⁶ MCM. April 1905. 28-29

¹⁶⁷ MCM. June 1907. 41

¹⁶⁸ Aubrey Samuel Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 11

¹⁶⁹ MCM. December 1908. 15-16

¹⁷⁰ The Kingswood Magazine. September 1885. 48

1896 Langley returned to South Africa to take up a position at South African College School (SACS). During his time at SACS he played for Hamiltons' Rugby Football Club and in 1896 he was chosen to represent Cape Town against the touring British and Irish Lions.

In 1897 he came back to Pietermaritzburg to take up the position of Senior Resident Housemaster at Maritzburg College. After arriving at College Langley took over the administration of College sport and, after a term of playing soccer, entrenched rugby as the premier sport at College¹⁷¹. Langley captained the College side for six years, guiding them to the Murray Cup (the Natal club rugby league) and the Yorkshire and Lancashire Cup (the Pietermaritzburg club rugby league) successes in 1900 and 1901 respectively¹⁷². His efforts at centre also led to personal acclaim. He was a regular member of the Pietermaritzburg Town team from 1897-1902 and in 1897 was selected to represent Natal at South African rugby trials, although these actually never took place.¹⁷³

On the 23 of May 1903, whilst playing for College against the West Yorkshire Regiment, Langley was "seized with an attack of vertigo" and was subsequently ordered by his doctor (Dr Currie) to stop playing rugby¹⁷⁴. Whilst this "attack" ended his playing days, Langley continued coaching the College side. Langley's role in coaching and administering club and school boy rugby is probably his most influential. Along with entrenching the game of rugby at both Maritzburg College and DHS, Langley played an instrumental part in the establishment and coaching of the Old Collegians Rugby Club¹⁷⁵. He was an early member of the Natal Rugby Union and is recorded as the Chairman of the NRU in 1899 and 1900¹⁷⁶. As the Chairman of Natal Rugby Union, Langley developed and implemented the idea of arranging an annual inter-town match between Pietermaritzburg and Durban to help raise funds for and select a side to represent Natal at the Currie Cup (South Africa's interprovincial rugby league)¹⁷⁷.

Having been first introduced to the game of rugby as a school boy at Kingswood School in 1884, Langley was one of the game's pioneering players and coaches. Rugby, having been formalised by the formation of the Rugby Football Union only in 1871, pioneers like Langley soon began to see the game, after developing more sophisticated player roles and team strategies, as an avenue through which character traits such as discipline, ability to work in a team, and team spirit or *esprit de corps* could be promoted and enhanced upon. Brian Stoddart, an expert on public school athleticism and the rationale behind it, highlights the fact that Victorian and Edwardian educational theorists believed that the social values directly tied to team sports in the public schools were teamwork, deference to authority, courage, loyalty,

¹⁷¹ MCM. December 1908, 15-16

¹⁷² Alfred Herbert. *The Natal Rugby Story*. (Durban: Shuter & Shooter, 1980). 83-87

¹⁷³ Herbert. *The Natal Rugby Story*. 72-73

¹⁷⁴ MCM. June 1903, 3

¹⁷⁵ MCM. September 1903, 27

¹⁷⁶ Herbert. *The Natal Rugby Story*. 76-81

¹⁷⁷ Herbert. *The Natal Rugby Story*. 72

and “respect for the rules.” Stoddart, in other words, argues that team sports such as rugby were meant to foster obedience and conformity¹⁷⁸.

One of the first English public school masters to recognise the disciplinary benefits of organised school sports was George Edward Lynch Cotton. Cotton was educated at Westminster College, Cambridge University and taught under Dr Thomas Arnold at Rugby School before being appointed headmaster of Marlborough College in 1852. He saw sports as a way of diverting a boy’s energies into constructive pastimes. In the years before organised games began, English public school pupils often spent their free time poaching and creating havoc in the countryside surrounding their schools. English public schools had also been prone to rebellions by disgruntled and rowdy pupils¹⁷⁹. On one occasion, a public school rebellion saw the pupils barricading the school. The ensuing siege was only broken when the local militia was called in to intervene. Cotton reasoned that situations like this could be avoided if public school boys were constructively occupied during the day and sent to bed exhausted at night¹⁸⁰.

The disciplinary benefits derived from organised and competitive sports were also appreciated by the leadership of South Africa’s ‘public schools’. During the 1929 Conference of Headmasters and Headmistresses of Private Schools of South Africa, the South African version of the English Public School’s Headmaster’s Conference, delegates voiced their approval of school sports by making pupil participation in such activities compulsory¹⁸¹. The authorities of Maritzburg College had come to a similar conclusion much earlier. In his Headmaster’s Report in 1914 ‘Pixie’ Barns, College’s fourth headmaster, was already claiming that the school’s “...guiding principle is that a boy whose time is fully occupied will necessarily have no time for loafing and mischief¹⁸².”

Like Barns, Langley argued (in an address to the South African Association for the Advancement of Science on “The Function of Athleticism in Education”) that, if implemented thoroughly, athleticism provides ill-disciplined boys with an outlet for their “savagery” and “restlessness.” As you will see in later chapters, Langley despised boys who did not involve themselves in the athletic side of school. These “shirkers” or “loafers”, as Langley referred to them, supposedly were more likely to commit crimes and were destined to join the ranks of lower white classes who Langley believed led unclean lives and who were a burden on the community¹⁸³. Langley’s hatred of “shirkers” and his belief in their latent deviousness is evident in his address on the “Functions of Athleticism in Education” when he

¹⁷⁸ Brian Stoddart. “Sport, Cultural Imperialism, and Colonial Response in the British Empire.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). 653

¹⁷⁹ James Mangin. *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). 22.

¹⁸⁰ J. R. de S Honey. *Tom Brown in South Africa: inaugural lecture delivered at Rhodes University on 10th May, 1972*. (Grahamstown: Rhodes University Press, 1972).

¹⁸¹ A. G. Sutcliffe. *The Story of The Conference of Headmasters and Headmistresses of Private Schools of South Africa During its First Half Century*. 1986. 3

¹⁸² MCM. June 1914. 9

¹⁸³ MCM. June 1908. 24

said: “I need not describe here, the steps from loafing to viciousness...often there is no distance at all¹⁸⁴.”

In the same address, Langley listed the academic benefits he associated with school athleticism. In addition to his belief that school athleticism provided an outlet for the energies of troublesome students, Langley argued that school athleticism served to build relationships between the student athletes and the teachers who coached them¹⁸⁵. Continuing in the vein of the academic benefits of school athleticism, Langley even went as far as to tell his audience that the self-discipline bred by sport would translate into classroom success. It was his reasoning that, as the student athlete began to understand the relationship between effort and success, he would also put more effort into his school work. He also argued that the competitive spirit induced by sport would lead the student athlete to compete academically with his peers whose competition he first encountered on the playing field¹⁸⁶.

Whilst these arguments in favour of school athleticism make Langley’s muscular educational philosophy seem ordinarily similar to those of English public school masters throughout the British Empire¹⁸⁷, the uniqueness of his own traumatic experiences and circumstance help one understand why advocates of school boy sport like Langley were so zealous in their promotion of sports like rugby. Langley, with his experiences of colonial warfare in South Africa, noted the vulnerability of the British presence in Southern Africa and came to see team sport as means of safeguarding the longevity of the British Empire.

Being on the colonial frontier and having witnessed three imperial wars, Langley was aware of the practical necessity behind the empire’s call for fit young men. As already mentioned, Langley had, as a boy, witnessed the fear that gripped Natal's colonists after the Zulu victory at Isandlwana. His second experience of warfare took place when he, as a resident master at Maritzburg College, witnessed and spoke to wounded and ill British soldiers when the school was converted into a British military hospital during the South African War of 1899-1902. His third experience of warfare occurred when he served as a squadron Lieutenant during the Bhambatha Rebellion of 1906. Interestingly enough he was part of the only Natal Carbineer squad to experience a fatality during this punitive campaign¹⁸⁸.

In his 1908 address to the South African Association for the Advancement of Science on “The Function of Athleticism in Education”, he went on to highlight the vulnerability of white South Africans: “the strenuous life must be in evidence in South Africa to counteract an evident demoralisation. A scattered population, surrounded by savagery- or by savages who are being taught to forget themselves¹⁸⁹...”

Langley harboured a fear of personal vulnerability from an early age. In his memoirs he describes his early years in York in the 1870s as “living on the edge of a volcano.” In the

¹⁸⁴ MCM. June 1908. 22

¹⁸⁵ MCM. June 1908. 18

¹⁸⁶ MCM. June 1908. 18-19

¹⁸⁷ See the many publications by authors like James Mangan and Murray Phillips.

¹⁸⁸ John Stalker. *The Natal Carbineers*. (Pietermaritzburg: P Davis, 1912). 198

¹⁸⁹ MCM. June 1908. 19

same breath he highlights the fact that he was not the only colonist who experienced a sense of physical insecurity when he says that during his childhood there was “general talk of the warlike character of the Pondos, of the unbeaten Basutos, of the Swazis and other tribes...¹⁹⁰.” These extracts from his memoirs highlight Langley and his community’s belief that they were surrounded by potential enemies and that they needed to remain alert and mentally and physically capable of dealing with their foes.

Langley’s fear was not unique. After Britain’s hard-won and costly victory over the Boer republics in the South African War of 1899-1902, many Britons such as Langley began to question the ability of the British male, individually outclassed during this war by his Boer opponents, to maintain the empire in the face of internal unrest and to protect the empire in the face of foreign invasion. The concern surrounding the physicality of the British male was so great that in 1903 British authorities established a committee (The Committee on Physical Deterioration) to investigate this waning physicality¹⁹¹.

The Committee on Physical Deterioration’s 1904 report confirmed the fear that the physicality of the British male was in fact in decline. The committee’s findings shocked a British public who had for years, considering the vast extent of their empire, assumed their own racial superiority. Most of the report’s finding dealt with the British working class whose generally poor physical condition from dreadful working and living conditions¹⁹² led to a nearly 60% rejection of working class applicants to the British military¹⁹³. After these findings were made public, the British people began to make sense of the difficulties in South Africa and began to make ominous predictions of future military disasters. Whilst the Committee on Physical Deterioration concerned itself with the decline of physicality of the British working class male, other events suggested that the working class was not the only sector of British society lacking the muscle needed to protect the empire.

Whilst a series of colonial rugby tours to the British Isles in the first two decades of the twentieth century may seem trivial now, the results of these tours only served to extend British fears of masculine deterioration and decline. The ‘Springbok’ tours of 1906-07 and 1912-13, New Zealand ‘All Black’ tour of 1905-06, and the Australian tour of 1908-09 humiliated the National rugby unions of Britain. Out of the 130 games played, the touring colonials won 117. This equates to a win rate of 90 percent¹⁹⁴. Although rugby is just a sport and that it might seem preposterous to make assumptions on the state of a nation’s manhood based on the results of games played between a small sample of men from the British Isles and the colonies, the game of rugby was seen as “the best trial of the relative vigour and virility of any two or more opposing countries¹⁹⁵,” at the time and the disastrous results of

¹⁹⁰ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 1

¹⁹¹ Jock Philips and John Nauright. “The Hard Man: Rugby and the Formation of Male Identity in New Zealand” in *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity* eds. Nauright and Chandler. (Ilford: Frank Cass and Co, 1996). 84

¹⁹² Great Britain. “Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration.” *Report on Physical Deterioration*. (1904). 83

¹⁹³ Samuel Hynes. *Edwardian Turn of Mind*. (New York: Random House, 2011). 22

¹⁹⁴ Nauright and Chandler. “Colonial Manhood and Imperial Race Virility.” 121

¹⁹⁵ Nauright and Chandler. “Colonial Manhood and Imperial Race Virility.” 122

these four tours added to the negative press surrounding the state of British manliness. When one also considers the fact that these results followed in the wake of the Second South African War of 1899-1902 and the Committee on Physical Deterioration of 1903-04, one cannot help but sense the concerns these tours raised in the minds of the British authorities and public.

To make matters worse, rugby was considered an upper class game as only the upper classes had the time and resources to devote to the game. With this in mind, these tours suggested a decline among the elite and that the decline highlighted by the Committee on Physical Deterioration was not isolated to the working poor. The fact that the British upper class seemed to suffer physical deterioration despite their access to sufficient amounts of food and fresh air soon led to a wide spread belief that their race was facing a decline that would potentially bring the empire to its knees¹⁹⁶. Critics then began to claim that both the foot soldiers and the officers of the British Empire were incapable of dealing with the empire's foes.

Instead of wallowing in self-pity, numerous British commentators began to voice their opinion as to the source of British masculine decline. The most prominent of these figures was the famous British imperial writer, Rudyard Kipling. In the preface to "Land and Sea Tales", a book Kipling dedicated to Britain's young boy scouts and girl guides, Kipling argued that the future of the British Empire depended upon the physical condition of her menfolk:

To all to whom this little book may come—
Health for yourselves and those you hold most dear!
Content abroad, and happiness at home,
And--one grand Secret in your private ear: --
Nations have passed away and left no traces,
And History gives the naked cause of it--
One single, simple reason in all cases;
They fell because their peoples were not fit¹⁹⁷.

Despite the fact that colonials had defeated mainland Britons on the rugby field and the fact that the colonies had more open space and opportunities for the rugged and physical lifestyle needed to produce men capable of sparing the British Empire the fate of its Greek and Roman predecessors, there was also fear the amongst colonial academics that urbanization and the use of indigenous labour in the colonies was beginning to weaken the men of the colonies¹⁹⁸. This belief was evident in the Christmas edition of the *Auckland Weekly News* of 1901. In this specific addition, a contributor said that "there is warrior blood in the veins of the pioneer

¹⁹⁶ Nauright and Chandler. "Colonial Manhood and Imperial Race Virility." 122

¹⁹⁷ Rudyard Kipling. *Land and Sea Tales for Scouts and Guides*. (London: Macmillan, 1923).

¹⁹⁸ Philips. *The Hard Man*. 80

settlers... Theirs is not the life of ease and comfort... Theirs the blood and the spirit to live in the land and hold it when luxury has sapped the virility of the city bred¹⁹⁹."

The fact that Langley shared the theory that imperial urbanisation leads to luxury, decadence, physical decay and unwarranted arrogance is evident in his address on "The Function of Athleticism in Education", where he claims to have noted an "evident demoralisation" in the urban and rural white communities. He believed that white South Africans harboured illusions of their physical capabilities: white boys often suffered an "egoism bred of being the 'inkosan' of a three-thousand acre farm²⁰⁰."

As one of the 'concerned colonial academics', Langley highlighted the need to preserve the masculine virtues of the rugged colonial frontiersman against what Jock Philips refers to as "urban decadence"²⁰¹. Langley's criticism of 'urban decadence' is evident in his memoirs where he mocks 'townies'²⁰², a derogatory term for town folk considered inferior in public school circles. Langley, like his mentor at Maritzburg College, Robert Clark, believed that boys with country breeding were of superior stock as a result of clean air, physical activity and a life free of urban vices. Langley was dismissive towards urban based day scholars and favoured the predominately rural based boarders. In his 1908 address, "The Function of Athleticism in Education" he condoned his boarding students' sense of elitism and chastised the day scholars for their lack of extra-curricular participation

"why should not the dayboys of our secondary and primary schools be subjected to regular athleticism as a function of their education? Oppidans [day scholars] as a body are looked down upon by boarders because so many of them are thewless [lacking muscular strength] creatures, with only a half developed sympathy for the scholastic institutions they attend²⁰³."

Langley's study of the classics would have also exacerbated his anxiety about the British Empire and its vulnerability. Classicists such as Langley came to see the downfall of ancient Greek and Roman civilisations as stemming from their spiral into decadence and the luxurious lifestyles of their ruling classes. They compared the urban decadence of the Britain with that of the Romans in the fifth century CE and used it to conclude that poor performance of British forces in the 1899-1902 South African War was hampered by the same urban luxury that brought the Western Roman Empire to its knees²⁰⁴.

Luckily for Langley and his concerned colonial counterparts they realised that a suitable remedy for the physical decline brought about by urbanisation and managerial occupations was already at hand. These commentators argued that rugby was a great avenue through which metropolitan men living in the British Isles and her colonies could reconnect with and display their physical nature. The positive side effects of rugby that helped men maintain

¹⁹⁹ Philips and Nauright. "The Hard Man".81

²⁰⁰ MCM. June 1908. 19-20

²⁰¹ Philips and Nauright. "The Hard Man". 70

²⁰² Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 21

²⁰³ James Nicholson and Tony Wiblin. *Jimeloyo-Ji!!* (Pietermaritzburg: M.C Publications, 1990).

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²⁰⁴ Philips and Nauright. "The Hard Man".80

masculine and physical vigour were eloquently noted in 1906 by the mayor of Wellington, New Zealand, T.W Hislop. On the occasion of the return of the 1905 All Black rugby team from their tour of the British Isles, Hislop said:

"under the luxurious circumstances in which modern society existed there was always the temptation or tendency to become effeminate and give up those manly exercises which had done so much to make the British people what they were. It was a matter of congratulation that that the love of these sports should continue among us²⁰⁵."

Whilst many British educational and social commentators saw team sports as part of the remedy to the deterioration of the British male physicality, this belief did not go unchallenged. As a concerned proponent of the British Empire, Rudyard Kipling joined the debate on the physical deterioration of Britain's menfolk. Unlike his sports crazed contemporaries, Kipling believed that team sports were not essential in promoting military skills. Commenting on the South African War of 1899-1902 his poem "The Islanders" serves as a fierce critique of the physical state and priorities of the British race, especially those taken in by arguments highlighting the benefits of team sports.

So? And ye train your horses and the dogs ye feed and prize?

How are the beasts more worthy than the souls, your sacrifice?

But ye said, "Their valour shall show them"; but ye said, "The end is close."

And ye sent them comfits and pictures to help them harry your foes:

And ye vaunted your fathomless power, and ye flaunted your iron pride,

Ere—ye fawned on the Younger Nations for the men who could shoot and ride!

Then ye returned to your trinkets; then ye contented your souls

With the flannelled fools at the wicket

or the muddled oafs at the goals²⁰⁶.

The poem illustrates the fact that Kipling, like Langley, believed that British race was being softened and made arrogant by the technologies and comforts emanating out of industrial Britain. The poem highlights Kipling's romantic view of the colonies, the lifestyles of colonial men and the men these lifestyles produced. It highlights his scorn of the British obsession with trivial team sports as opposed to worthwhile, in his opinion, pursuits like riding and shooting. The poem also voices, later on, Kipling's belief that Britain should introduce national service in order to reverse this decline and help prepare Britain for the European war Kipling and many of his contemporaries saw as inevitable.

Although Langley admired Kipling's crusade to discover and eliminate the factors behind the poor physical state of British men and agreed with Kipling's belief that Britain's manliness was in decline, he did not agree with Kipling's criticism of public school athleticism. In his

²⁰⁵ Philips and Nauright. "The Hard Man".80

²⁰⁶ Rudyard Kipling. *The Islanders*. (1902).

address to the South African Association for the Advancement of Science in 1908, he claimed that Kipling's attack on "flannelled fools" and "muddied oafs" stemmed from his narrow observations of English public schools which were not thorough enough in their application of school athleticism. According to Langley, many of these schools merely pay lip service to the old 'disciplinary' and 'esprit-de-corps' benefits often used by supporters of schoolboy athleticism²⁰⁷.

In his address on "The Function of Athleticism in Education" Langley highlighted his understanding of the physical deterioration debate and even adds an alternative reason as to why Britain's military struggled during the South African War of 1899-1902. He argued that the British race's "instinct of preservation" was hindered by "laziness", "the trusting of luck instead of foresighted action", "a defiant reluctance to accept any attempted organisation which necessitates control of communities by the individual", and "a false idea of the Britisher's rights." He argued that these liberal trends allowed the British people to slip into "a perennial siesta" which, if continued, would lead to the downfall of Britain and her empire.

However, in the same address, Langley also offered a solution to Britain's weakening physicality and resolve. In the address he maintained that Britons could maintain their presence in South Africa and overcome their enemies:

"by instilling into the youth of South Africa, whilst under tuition, prompt and unquestioning obedience. By developing his body equally with his mind, and by sending him back to his home a capable athlete as well as an interested student. I say athlete, for he then has qualities developed which are peculiarly fitted for pioneer life. He is quick of eye, and every muscle springs to attention in response to necessity. His mind seizes on a plan of action commensurate with his bodily capability, and that instantly. He has learnt, too, the value of combination with fellows- one might call it the science of combined action. It has been developed on the football field²⁰⁸."

Langley's "science of combined action" was meant to encourage teamwork, team spirit, obedience, courage, stoical toughness and rapid decision making along with endurance, speed, and physical strength.

In his address to the South African Association for the Advancement of Science he claimed that he had seen many boys, some timid and clumsy, develop these attributes after playing rugby for a few months. According to Langley:

"Watch the youngster playing for the first time... he is conscious of a surging mass of humanity around him, of being borne along in a shockingly helpless state, and he loses the first bit of egoism bred of being the 'inkosan' of a three-thousand acre farm. There are really overwhelming forces on this earth from which he must defend himself, and he has to make himself fit to cope with them. If he tries to shirk, he is banged back into the ruck, so he gives up trying to shirk and does his best... he next learns that he is capable of giving assistance to a hard-pressed partner, but he must be quick, and does it

²⁰⁷ MCM. June 1908. 19

²⁰⁸ MCM. June 1908. 19-20

at risk to himself. Rapidity of thought and action are developed, and though it takes months, the continuous and regular opportunities afforded for the exercise of this rapidity make it almost second nature to him²⁰⁹...”

This passage eloquently highlights the fact that the psychological and intellectual benefits were just as important to Langley as the physical benefits obtained through sport. Langley often claimed that a team mentality and ability to work as a team to accomplish a common goal was one of most important characteristics developed through team sports like rugby. In Langley’s day the game had evolved from its early days when it was predominately about brute force. The tactics of the English rugby team of 1888 ushered in a new era of tactical rugby. An era in which, according to the Wellington Rugby Football Annual, players had “to think more and buttock less²¹⁰.”

The Langley’s adoption of this tactical brand of rugby, the importance he placed on team work and the disregard for one’s personal gain and safety is evident in his repeated criticism of selfish players. In his season report of the 1905 College rugby team, Langley criticized a boy by the name of Payn (the left wing) for “looking after his own skin” and a boy by the name of Boast (the scrum half) for clinging to the ball too much²¹¹. In the same report, Langley’s distaste for individualism is evident when he congratulates the rugby side for the way they discarded “baneful individuality²¹².” The 1907 College rugby report contains similar evidence of values Langley saw in rugby when he criticised a boy by the name of Harkness for his individuality and lack of determination in the face of defeat²¹³. In the same report, Langley states that “we want players who have no time to stop and think about themselves, whether in respect of grievances or conceit²¹⁴.”

In 1907 Langley penned “Some Reflections on Sport” for the College Magazine. This article highlights that Langley was one of those men Albert Grundlingh claims saw rugby as a “sport of combat²¹⁵.” He argued that the friendly rugby rivalry that existed between schools like Hilton College, Michaelhouse, and College helped breed the “thaws and courage, and manly capability” that old boys of these schools drew upon during their service in the Bhambata Rebellion. This, he wrote, enabled an “insignificant number” of white colonists to keep the “hordes of blacks” in check²¹⁶. He expressed the same sentiment a year later in his address on “The Function of Athleticism in Education.”

“The qualities developed on the football field were sound, for they held good under conditions of life and death... the spirit of camaraderie bred of sport was always there to help under all conditions whether favourable or adverse... our picked athletes. They invariably acted as I had often seen them act in times of stress in many a hard fought

²⁰⁹ MCM. June 1908. 19-20

²¹⁰ Philips and Nauright. “The Hard Man”.78

²¹¹ MCM. October 1905. 31

²¹² MCM. October 1905. 30

²¹³ MCM. December 1907. 31

²¹⁴ MCM. December 1907. 31

²¹⁵ A Grundlingh, A Odendaal and B Spies. *Beyond the Tryline: Rugby and South African Society* (Johannesburg, Ravan, 1995). 113

²¹⁶ MCM. June 1907. 19-21

match, and the spirit of camaraderie bred of sport was always there to help under all conditions, whether favourable or adverse. These different qualities had merged into a powerful manliness which was noticeable everywhere, and made them fit companions for their elders who saw service in the Boer War, and did so well there²¹⁷.”

Langley’s theories spread across Natal and, after a while, schools across the province began promoting rugby with the belief that it provided “a training ground in courage and self-control and the best sort of toughness²¹⁸.”

Langley’s belief that participation in team sport would lead to martial prowess in the student athlete was so strong that he often thought it appropriate to compare sporting matches to battles and embellish war stories with sporting metaphors. His tendency to link the sporting field with the battlefield can often be seen in his writing and the writings of the students under him. In the article entitled “Some Reflections on Sport”, Langley recalled the life and heroic death of an Old Collegian by the name of Howes. According to the article; Howes, “who at school doggedly did his work in the pack, and doggedly fought the game out to the end”, put this determination to use in the Boer War. The article reports that: “he doggedly on one occasion struggled through a hail of bullets clinging to an ammunition pack horse, and, though badly wounded, replenished the failing supply of his gallant comrades²¹⁹.” After this battle, he was sent back to Maritzburg College- which had been requisitioned as a military hospital during the war. However, the article tells us that Howes, who as a boy “fought the game out to the end”, was soon back at the front. It continues by saying that he received his death wound during a “scrimmage”. In a testament to the way he played rugby the article claimed that: “it was only when the scrimmage was over that he gave in²²⁰.”

Langley’s students adopted his belief that war was the greatest game and one in which the players could truly test and display their manliness. This adoption is evident in the March 1916 editorial of the DHS magazine. The editor of this edition records the premature departure of many of boys of the Upper School and a “sprinkling in the Lower” saying that, “they have now gone to play a greater one [game], and the majority are already with the Colours. Within a few days they cast aside the somewhat light responsibilities of school-boys, shouldered those of men...²²¹” This sentiment is echoed in the May 1918 edition of the DHS magazine. Once again we see the schoolboy editor likening sport to war when he says, “once more, with the beginning of a new School year...new captains, versed in the traditions of old, mass their troops on playing-field...²²²” Not only do these comments highlight the war fervour that was sweeping through DHS, the comments highlight the fact that Langley and his staff encouraged this jingoistic and martial sentiment in their pupils, and the false belief that war was the ultimate game of men.

²¹⁷ Robert Morrell. *From Boys to Gentlemen: Settler Masculinity in Colonial Natal 1880-1920*. (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2001). 111-112

²¹⁸ Peter Randall. *Little England On The Veld: The English Private School System in South Africa*. (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1982). 121

²¹⁹ MCM. June 1907. 19-21

²²⁰ MCM. June 1907. 19-21

²²¹ DHS Magazine. March 1916. 1

²²² DHS Magazine. May 1918. 1

Along with providing young colonists with the physicality and masculine character needed to protect the British Empire, Langley also believed that rugby developed relations needed to strengthen the white man's control of Southern Africa. Like many within newly formed Union of South Africa, Langley believed that games like rugby helped unify the white nations of South Africa²²³. He believed that the camaraderie fostered by rugby helped bridge the gap between the British and Afrikaans nations still separated by the memory of the South African War of 1899-1902. According to Langley, the "British and Dutch revelled in the comradeship of the newly introduced rugby..."²²⁴ Like the Union government formed eight years after the war, Langley saw genial Anglo-Afrikaans relations as essential in their administration and control of a predominately 'black' South Africa.

Despite what Langley saw as the physical and character building benefits of rugby, critics of the game often said that rugby led to a masculine code characterised by hooliganism and unrestrained bouts of violent physicality. Langley disagreed saying that rugby players are governed by referees and their peers. Langley outlined his confidence in the disciplined nature of the rugby in his address on "The Function of Athleticism in Education".

"he [the rugby playing school boy] must obey both the captain and the referee; and in the modern organisation of controlled sport an impudent and careless player always comes off badly. To put it shortly, the youth learns to be instant in obedience, whilst under the influence of excitement...the punishment meted out to the offender by his fellows when he goes lose on the field, is bound to influence him. Should he loose command of himself there, he forfeits all claims to consideration, and is either asked to adjourn to the settling-ground of school-boy disputes- or worse, is pointed at as a 'rotter,' and the position of the rogue elephant is heavenly compared to him"²²⁵."

Herein is contained another benefit Langley saw within team sports such as cricket and rugby. Langley believed that both cricket and rugby were games played by gentlemen as both sporting codes required what he called "gentlemanly instinct"²²⁶. Judging from the tone of his other comments surrounding the games of cricket and rugby, Langley believed that these games required gentlemanly qualities such as fair play, teamwork, courage (or pluck as his generation liked to refer to it) and self-sacrifice. For this reason, Langley believed that playing rugby (like an understanding of the classics) enhanced one's social standing.

Langley, like many of his generation and socio-economic class, classified rugby as a middle to upper class game²²⁷. Nowhere is this belief more evident than in the cliché, "football is a gentleman's game played by hooligans and rugby is a hooligan's game played by gentleman." His promotion of the game of rugby and his criticism of football and schools who played football again highlights Langley's need to assert his class and that of his school. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Langley's rants against 'the tech' (Technical College

²²³ A Grundlingh, A Odendaal and B Spies. *Beyond the Tryline: Rugby and South African Society* (Johannesburg, Ravan, 1995). 111

²²⁴ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 28

²²⁵ MCM. June 1908. 20-21

²²⁶ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 27

²²⁷ Alan Paton. *Towards the Mountain*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981). 114

which later became Glenwood High School), whose premier winter sport was initially football, are legendary. His suggestion that ‘tech’ boys were inferior to his own and his accusations of their innate criminality and deceitfulness highlight his own insecurities and his attempt to reassert the social standing of his school and himself.

The lengths Langley went to to promote DHS as a public school are abundantly evident in the pages of the DHS Magazine, his memoirs and *The Natal Mercury*. In the first half of 1917 a team comprised solely of English public school boys played a game of cricket against DHS. The editor of the June 1917 edition of the school magazine claimed that “in many respects this was a particularly appropriate match, and one possessed of a unique interest, for of recent years- since Mr Langley took control- the High School has been conducted on English Public School lines...²²⁸” In late 1917, Langley organised a rugby match between DHS and team comprised of former public school educated officers who had been training in South Africa and were soon to transfer to India. This game, along with the game against the mixed English public school cricket team earlier in 1917, highlights Langley’s attempt to gain public school recognition for his own school and his attempts to get his boys to mix with and learn from English public school boys. As a colleague of mine, Matthew Marwick, surmised, it seems as if Langley was trying to instil English public school values and obtain public school status via osmosis. Langley’s mission to promote himself as classically trained headmaster of a public school and the social status of his boys seems to have paid off. *The Natal Mercury* of 18 April 1931 confirmed Langley’s claims by reporting that DHS “still proudly maintains the traditions of an English Public School²²⁹.”

Langley’s promotion of physical team sports such as cricket and rugby largely stemmed from insecurities he shared with many of his contemporaries. As this chapter has illustrated, Langley’s obsession with sport and its promotion at a schoolboy level are testament to his fear of the deterioration of the Anglo-Saxon race and the threats it faced from the vassals and enemies of the British Empire. His theories of educational athleticism were his attempt to promote amongst his pupils a masculinity that was physically robust, quick thinking and selfless. Langley’s obsession with sport and its promotion at a schoolboy level are also testament to his mission to promote the idea that both he and his students were part of the imperial elite, more than fit enough, in both body and character, to serve as companions to the public school elite of the British mainland.

²²⁸ DHS Magazine. June 1917. 18

²²⁹ The Natal Mercury. 18 April 1931.

Chapter 5:

Pain, Privation and Prefects: Langley's covert toughening curriculum

“After Langley had flogged all the smokers, he decided to cane the remaining thirty per cent for ‘good measure’²³⁰.”

Hubert Jennings recalling an episode in which Langley caned the entire school

Langley, like his mentor Robert Clark, saw his role as a “moulder of men²³¹”. Along with providing his boys with a platform for academic growth, Langley began introducing and endorsing school structures he believed would positively shape the masculine characters and physiques of his pupils in preparation for the rigors of life after school. These structures and traditions are best referred to as Langley's covert curriculum as they encompassed the moral and social lessons which Langley sought to pass on indirectly²³². His covert curriculum was so successful that Peter Randall described Langley as one of those impressive headmasters who imposed the stamp of their own personalities on their schools²³³.

²³⁰ Hubert Jennings. *The D.H.S Story, 1866-1966: A Great Book About a Great School*. (Durban: The Durban High School and Old boys' Memorial Trust, 1966). 121

²³¹ William Abbit. *A Brief Account of the Proceedings at the Unveiling of The War Memorial and of Mr. R.D. Clark's Portrait*. (Pietermaritzburg: P. Davis and Sons, 1912). 23

²³² Sydney Gamaliel and Valentino Mkuchu. *Gender roles in textbooks as a function of hidden curriculum in Tanzania primary schools*. (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2009).

²³³ Peter Randall. *Little England On The Veld: The English Private School System in South Africa*. (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1982). 67

In order to come to terms with Langley's covert curriculum this chapter investigates the comparative toughening regimes of British public schools, the gendered rationale behind these regimes, Langley's own childhood experiences and the process whereby these experiences became a basis for his pedagogical beliefs and practices at DHS. More specifically this last section will analyse Langley's use of corporal punishment, domestic privation, and endorsement of a system of pupil hierarchy and age related privilege.

Public schools and their covert curriculums

Strict discipline, poor living conditions, and pupil hierarchy and privilege systems were common at English public schools. After their reforms of the nineteenth century, English public schools came to see themselves as institutions whose duty it was to include moral values in education. Starting with Thomas Arnold at Rugby, Britain's public schools introduced structures aimed at enhancing boys' characters as well as their intellects. These structures included a strict disciplinary regime, pupil hierarchy and privilege system²³⁴. The masters at these schools endorsed practices such as corporal punishment, initiation, prefects, fagging and privileges as they believed that these practices improved characters of the boys subject to them²³⁵.

The fact that the covert curriculums of Britain's public school were adopted by their overseas counterparts is highlighted by Robert Morrell's article, "Masculinity and the White Boys' Boarding Schools of Natal, 1880-1930". This article highlights the role of corporal punishment, initiation and other violent traditions practiced in the all-white boys' boarding schools of Natal in the production of a "rugged masculinity"²³⁶. The lengths to which these schools were willing to go to encourage a "rugged masculinity" amongst their students can be gleaned from a moth-eaten and journal contained in the archives of Maritzburg College. The yellowing pages of this journal, entitled: "A Record of Corporal Punishment- College 1888-1918", record the horrifyingly frequent use of corporal punishment by College's masters during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Because of the book's deterioration I had to rely on Morrell's summary of the journal in order to decipher the brutal excesses recorded within its pages. According to Morrell, the categories of punishment and number of boys punished during the period 1888-1905 were as follows:

1. Lazy, Neglect, Untidy, Careless, Striking Work, Cut work, Inattention: 91
2. Disobedient, Impertinent, Impudent, Cheek, Disrespectful, Insolence: 22
3. Dishonest, Cheating, Truant, Cribbing: 30
4. Thuggish, Disorderly, Riotous, Vandalising, Ink Slinging, Talking in Exams, Cut Detention, Misconduct, Brawling: 119

²³⁴ Francis Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii: Public School Education in the Victorian Era, the Classical Curriculum, and the British Imperial Ethos*. (Wesleyan University: Unpublished Honours Thesis, 2008). 14

²³⁵ Robert Morrell, "'Synonymous with Gentlemen'? White Farmers, White Schools and Labour Relations on the farms of the Natal Midlands, c1880-1920" in J. Crush and A.H. Jeeves (eds.), *White Farms, Black Workers: The State and Agrarian Change in Southern Africa, 1910-1950* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1997). 174

²³⁶ Robert Morrell. "Masculinity and the White Boys' Boarding Schools of Natal, 1880-1930." *Perspectives in Education*. (15: 1, 1994).

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Morrell's summary becomes more specific stating that in the year 1903 College authorities, headed by Ernest 'Pixie' Barns, administered 282 cane strokes at an average of 4.47 strokes per infringement. In 1904 the average number of strokes increased to 6.03 per infringement. In 1905, we see only a slight decrease to 5.96 strokes per infringement. On one specific occasion in 1905, a pupil received fourteen cane strokes for skipping school. However, the most shocking aspect of this book is its incomplete nature, which is alluded to in the book's preface which states: "NB Only abnormal causes of punishment are recorded. Ordinary penalties are too frequent and frivolous to merit record"²³⁷."

The rationale behind the covert curriculums of public schools

The belief that the covert curriculum of public schools should encourage a "rugged masculinity" was not unique to Natal's 'public schools'. Public school masters throughout the British Empire believed that the education of elite white boys should take place in a harsh and competitive environment in which they were beaten and bumped shoulders with other boys. One of the objectives of this environment was an overall process of hardening, a process that could only be achieved by removing boys from their homes and the 'feminine comforts' associated with them²³⁸. This way of thinking developed during this era because of the threats and opportunities posed by Britain's vast empire, her more hostile subjects and traditional rivals. These threats led Britons to develop a robust definition of masculinity. According to masculine theorist John Tosh, the British saw the status quo as under threat and, as a result, sought to produce young men "who were tough, realistic, unsqueamish and stoical"²³⁹."

These schools also believed that the hierarchical system in vogue at public schools developed leadership potential and a respect for hierarchy that characterised the British Empire. This belief was summarised by George Moberly, Headmaster of Winchester College 1835-1866, in 1861:

"I know no place in life where the training of a young man is more man-like, more searching, and more elevating than that of a high-minded youth holding such a post at the top of a public school. If I wanted to train a youth for high after-duties- duties requiring self-control, careful judgment, and the habit of self-relying command of others, I do not think that I could find any in modern English life which would give him these qualities in a more hopeful and beneficial way, than by leading him up through the obedience of a Junior, first to be one of the prefects, and in due time to become the prefect of hall at Winchester"²⁴⁰."

²³⁷ Morrell. "Masculinity and the White Boys' Boarding Schools of Natal". 13

²³⁸ Fabrice Neddam. "Constructing masculinities under Thomas Arnold of Rugby (1828-1842): Gender, Educational Policy and School Life in an Early-Victorian Public School." *Gender and Education*. (16: 3, 2004). 305

²³⁹ John Tosh. "'A Fresh Access of Dignity': Masculinity and Imperial Commitment in Britain, 1815-1914". In *History and African Studies Seminar*. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa, 1999. 15

²⁴⁰ Jones. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 107

These beliefs were also shared by the parents who sent their sons to these schools. J. R. de Honey explains that during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, parents exposed their sons to sickness, vice, brutality, cold, and starvation (be it systematic or incidental) because they thought that these conditions would prove beneficial to their sons in the long run. Drawing on the work of anthropologist van Gennep, de Honey argues that Victorian parents recognised the value ancient initiation practises of separation and the endurance of pain played in ‘hardening’ and making ‘tough men’ of young boys²⁴¹.

This belief would have resonated with a public and parents who were imbued with an image of manly heroes who braved the imperial frontier, living in “physical isolation” and mastering the forces of nature²⁴². Parents, in accordance with this image, encouraged their sons to face these ‘Spartan hardships’ so that they may be prepared for their future careers. The author of *Prefects: British Leadership and the Public School Tradition*, Rupert Wilkinson, argues that this “would apply especially to the colonial service where physical discomforts and family sacrifice had their public school counterparts in unheated dormitories, cold baths, and monastic isolation²⁴³.”

Considering the fact that Natal was the epitome of a frontier society during this period, the teachers and parents associated with Natal’s public schools would have especially seen a rugged Spartan school experience as perfect preparation for the harsh realities of life in Natal and possible conflicts with African and Boer neighbours. Any parents unconvinced by this way of thinking and who complained were informed by teachers such as Langley that the Spartan living conditions of their boarding establishments produced lean, fit and tough boys²⁴⁴.

Langley’s upbringing and the formation of his covert curriculum

Langley was brought up in this era when corporal punishment, harsh living conditions and hierarchy were considered natural and essential elements in a boy’s journey towards manhood. The fact that he was beaten as a child is evident in a story contained in his memoirs. According to the story, which took place at his father’s mission at York, one of his brothers, after a long day of fly-fishing, spotted a schoolmaster and began calling out his name. As it turned out, the schoolmaster was stalking plovers when his brother’s exuberance chased the birds away. As a result both he and his brother were given a beating which Langley romantically recalled saying “thus, in contact with the swine [the rod], the youths learned wisdom²⁴⁵.”

²⁴¹ J.R de Honey. “Tom Brown’s Universe: The Nature and Limits of the Victorian Public Schools Community” in *The Victorian Public School: Studies in the Development of an Educational Institution*. eds. Brain Simon and Ian Bradley. (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1975). 22

²⁴² Stefan Collini. *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850-1930*. (New York: Clarendon, 1991). 116

²⁴³ Rupert Wilkinson. *The Prefects: British Leadership and the Public School Tradition*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1964). 16

²⁴⁴ Morrell. “Masculinity and the White Boys’ Boarding Schools of Natal”. 19-20

²⁴⁵ Aubrey Samuel Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 8

Langley's memoirs also highlight the fact that his childhood was characterised by rugged living conditions and occasional hunger. Langley recalls how his brothers and he used to rush their African servant when he cooked the birds that they had shot as they were constantly hungry²⁴⁶. The satiation of hunger could warrant the endurance of pain as well. Langley recounts a case of toothache which necessitated a three mile walk to the dentist in order to seek treatment. He explains that the pain was alleviated somewhat when the dentist gave him a generous serving of bread and butter as his stomach was truly "another yearning cavity"²⁴⁷.

Langley's life does not seem to have become more comfortable when he enrolled as a schoolboy at Kingswood School in Bath. According to the Kingswood Magazine of December 1936, which contains a brief note announcing Langley's retirement as headmaster of DHS, "Langley (A.S about 1885) has recently retired after some 30 years stewardship as Headmaster of Durban High School, where he ruled 700 boys with a rod a good deal more pliable than iron! He had a great reputation as an executioner. He told me he modelled his discipline on that of K.S.²⁴⁸ [Kingswood School]."

Langley's upbringing in both York and Bath highlights the fact that Langley was both accustomed to and in favour of the beatings and privations that characterised the covert curriculums of public schools throughout the British Empire. With this in mind, it is not difficult to understand why Langley implemented his own covert curriculum aimed at toughening his boys and preparing them for positions in the service of the empire.

Langley's toughening curriculum

Discipline

Having been subjected to an upbringing peppered with beatings, one can understand why Langley implemented a fierce disciplinary regime at DHS. This aspect of Langley's educational ideology is probably the most prominent of the Langley legend and has led a scholar like Tony Voss, in his analysis of Roy Campbell's literary works, to refer to Langley as Campbell's "Plagosus Orbilius" (his 'flogger') - the same affectionate nickname Horace (a Roman poet from the first century BCE) used to describe his own strict schoolmaster. Voss' description of Langley seems justified if one reads Hubert Jennings' history of DHS which is full of harrowing tales of Langley's tough demeanour and use of the cane. When Langley took up the position of headmaster of Durban High School (DHS) in 1910 Jennings claims that Langley would often shock the mothers of new boys with the frankness of, what can only be described as, his 'tough love' approach to education. According to Jennings,

"Many a fond mother, telling the usual tale of fond mothers, 'he is a rather delicate boy and very highly strung, but with kindness and sympathy', would find herself cut short

²⁴⁶ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 7

²⁴⁷ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 8

²⁴⁸ Kingswood School Magazine. December 1936. 47

by his calling a passing boy and saying, ‘take this young cub to IIC [the third class in the second form] and tell them to knock some sense into him²⁴⁹!’”

Whilst Hubert Jennings, DHS’ biographer and a member of Langley’s staff who shared many of his boss’ beliefs, may have intended this story to be taken light-heartedly, Langley’s methods were no laughing matter for those on the receiving end. According to Jennings, Langley once caned the entire school during an assembly. According to the legend, sometime around 1917 Langley called five or six boys guilty of smoking to the lectern during a school assembly. Langley then asked the rest of the school to step forward if they were guilty of the same offence. Apparently four hundred boys, about seventy per cent of the school, confessed. After Langley had flogged all the smokers, he decided to cane the remaining thirty per cent for “good measure”²⁵⁰.

Along with being a product of Langley’s violent upbringing, this story highlights the fact that rationale behind his use of corporal punishment mirrored those members of the public school community who used beatings to toughen young boys. The phrase “good measure” highlights the fact that Langley’s use of the cane cannot be wholly ascribed to the negative reinforcement of rules or correcting anti-social behaviour. Instead it illustrates the fact that canning was a part of Langley’s toughening regime, a regime he believed would promote a rugged masculinity capable of facing the rigors of the outside world, specifically the challenges they may face in the service of the British Empire. These were the same challenges Langley envisioned when promoting the athletic aspect of his school curriculum. As Robert Morrell rightly illustrates, “Corporal punishment was not just a manifestation of the power of senior of junior, it was part of a system that socialized boys into gentlemen, creating manliness as it did so²⁵¹.”

The toughening aspect of Langley’s use of corporal punishment and the manliness associated with it was not lost on the boys themselves who preferred canning to other non-physical forms of punishment. The ritual of canning was charged with symbols of masculine bravado as it served to affirm their masculinity and toughness. Boys would proudly bare their “cuts” to their peers, often telling them how they received them without complaint. Some boys would even challenge one another to ‘races’ to see who could get the most strokes over a stipulated period of time²⁵². David Brokensha, who enrolled at DHS shortly after Langley’s retirement, claims that a canning improved a boy’s “cred”²⁵³.

Privation

The histories of Maritzburg College and DHS are full of references to harsh living conditions which complemented Langley’s toughening regime. Recollections of old boys who boarded at College when Langley was Senior Resident Master and DHS when he was Headmaster

²⁴⁹ Jennings. *The D.H.S Story*. 117

²⁵⁰ Jennings. *The D.H.S Story*. 121

²⁵¹ Morrell. "Synonymous with Gentlemen?" 178

²⁵² Morrell. "Masculinity and the White Boys' Boarding Schools of Natal". 15

²⁵³ David Brokensha. "Youth". *Brokie's Way: An Anthropologist's Story*. (Accessed: 16 December 2015) www.brokiesway.co.za/youth.htm

describe the conditions prevalent in the boarding establishments as ‘Spartan’, offering their occupants little in the way of human and material comfort. Numerous College old boys who were at school during the early part of the twentieth century recall how the matron, Miss Wentworth, believed that anything from a tummy bug to an injury gained whilst playing rugby could be successfully treated with the correct amount of castor oil. Old Collegian Denzil Will also recalled how boys were forced to endure cold showers that were exposed to icy winds coming off of the Drakensberg mountain range²⁵⁴. Whilst these conditions were bad enough, the source of most discontent amongst Langley’s boarders was the food and/or lack thereof. Throughout this period, both College and DHS boys managed to survive on maize porridge and bread. Luxuries such as meat and sugar were rare if not a foreign commodity to boarders²⁵⁵.

The son of Jack Cope, famous South African author and boarder at Langley’s DHS, explained via email that, “like all teenage boys they [Jack Cope and his fellow boarders at DHS] were perpetually hungry.” According to the stories Jack Cope told his son, the boarding establishment “always served stale bread first - so that the boys would eat less. If they could, they would eat their way through to the fresh bread - since the school was not allowed to deny them bread. The bread served was sliced - bread and scrape - with some butter.” Michael Cope recalls his father saying that “when the cooks had finished buttering the bread they would have more butter than when they started - because of the crumbs²⁵⁶.” Apparently the food situation at DHS under Langley was so bad that Jack Cope and his friends “smuggled meat out of the boarding house and had someone [Michael Cope recalls that it may have been the District Surgeon] declare it ‘unfit for human consumption’ causing a minor scandal²⁵⁷.” Whilst I have not found any evidence of this scandal in the Durban newspapers, this tale highlights how tough it was schooling under Langley.

Langley’s mission to promote a hardy masculinity amongst his students also seems to have extended to his social demeanour and interaction with the boys. The old boy who gave the eulogy at his funeral described Langley as “blunt in speech, almost to a point which gave offence on occasion²⁵⁸.” This unblinking countenance can be seen in his interaction with the anxious mother (referred to earlier in this chapter) and negative reviews he gave rugby players who were selfish or skittish. Another example of Langley’s tendency to starve his students of emotional sustenance, like he did domestic comforts, is contained in a story surrounding the first cricket side’s victory over Michaelhouse in 1930. According to Jennings, after having beaten Michaelhouse for the first time in 17 years, the team was looking forward to a word of praise from Langley on the Monday following their victory. Instead, in true Langley fashion, he berated the cricketers saying, “You white-livered scum! For seventeen years you have gone up there with your tails between your legs and been

²⁵⁴ Simon Haw and Richard Frame. *For Hearth and Home: The Story of Maritzburg College, 1863-1988*. (Pietermaritzburg: MC Publications, 1988). 229

²⁵⁵ Morrell. “Masculinity and the White Boys’ Boarding Schools of Natal”. 19-20

²⁵⁶ Correspondence with Michael Cope (son of Jack Cope- a famous author, academic and a scholar under ASL) Mar 15, 2014.

²⁵⁷ Correspondence with Michael Cope (son of Jack Cope- a famous author, academic and a scholar under ASL) Mar 15, 2014.

²⁵⁸ The Natal Mercury. 24 December 1939.

kicked around as you deserved. Now that you have done what you ought to have done years ago, you expect to be patted. Get back to your kennels²⁵⁹!”

This outburst seems to echo the description of Langley’s method of interaction contained in the obituary Neville Nuttall wrote for Langley and published in the school magazine. According to Nuttall, “He blamed, and blamed with vigour when blame was required.” Whilst this confirms Langley as psychological bully, the method behind this madness is referred to by Nuttall in the next sentence - “his praise was one of the most inspiring things I have ever known.” According to Nuttall, Langley’s habit of offering only the rarest praise was the most powerful “of all his qualities” and one which gave him “his power of inspiring loyalty”. Nuttall ends off saying, “of all men I have known, he was the one I would most gladly follow, blindly, on the field of battle²⁶⁰.”

This mixture of scorn and praise was also present in his speech humiliating the first cricket side in 1930 after its memorable victory over Michaelhouse when he concluded by playfully adding “But Waller was magnificent²⁶¹.” It is also not surprising to note that Jack Cope, who hated Langley and his time at DHS, was given a half bottle of sweets by Langley after Cope uncharacteristically hit a six during a cricket game. Cope noted that this tactic disarmed boys who “after months of grinding tyranny...a flame burst up in our hearts²⁶².”

As these anecdotes illustrate, not only did Langley use this harsh demeanour to stiffen the masculine characters of his boys and acclimatise his students to the harsh realities of the outside world and thankless roles they might occupy in the service of the empire- this demeanour, spiked with occasional praise, resulted in many of his pupils developing a strong sense of loyalty to their headmaster.

Pupil hierarchy

Public schools featured strong pupil hierarchies which allocated seniority to those who had been enrolled longest in the school and who had risen highest in terms of the rungs associated with academic performance (which terminated with final matriculation that marked the end of schooling). An additional source of status was sporting achievement such as selection to representative rugby and cricket teams. Place in the hierarchy came with privileges and power. The higher up the hierarchy the more powerful and the lower down, the more vulnerable. While students enforced these hierarchies and gave them daily grip on the lives of schoolboys, school masters tacitly and in some cases explicitly supported them. They supported pupil hierarchies because hierarchy encouraged obedience and hard work as boys realised that they would have to achieve either academically or athletically to be awarded with a leadership position. Pupil hierarchy was also encouraged because it reflected the logic of the imperial world in which the boys would find themselves after school²⁶³.

²⁵⁹ Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 120

²⁶⁰ DHS Magazine. June 1940. 5

²⁶¹ Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 120

²⁶² Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 217

²⁶³ Morrell. "Synonymous with Gentlemen?" 175-176

Langley was unapologetically supportive of pupil hierarchy. In his 1913 speech day address he congratulated the sixth form for upholding “the best traditions of the school”, “the steady influence they had shown” and the “manly lead [they had taken] in all the details of school life²⁶⁴.” During Langley’s tenure as the Headmaster of DHS he gave the older boys the responsibility of maintaining the school’s traditions and spirit. According to Langley, “the morale the school was theirs [the sixth form] to damn or revive²⁶⁵...” In addition he tolerated and, in some instances, promoted the privilege system that accompanied this ‘form hierarchy’. So evident was this established order of privilege that one could tell which form a boy belonged to merely by observing his various ‘badges of rank’. For example, each form had a unique way of wearing their bashers (straw boaters). According to the Michaelmas 1924 edition of the DHS magazine, “New boys, of course, always do, and always will, have their hats leaning forward over their eyes; they will always hold them on as they run, and clutch them tightly...” On the other hand, fourth formers, “who, it is hoped, have attained a little dignity, are advised to wear them straight; while the fifths, who on account of their increasing importance in the school, are decidedly jaunty, are recommended to display a considerable tilt²⁶⁶...”

The same can be said of the way boys carried their books as, according to the same publication, “the new boy brings his books to school in a satchel... the fourths would be well advised to... carry their books in an attaché case...” This hierarchy was also applied to hair as “the third former almost invariably keeps his hair shorn close all over his head. The further a boy rises up the school the more ‘brilliantine’ he uses on his hair, which becomes longer in proportion.” Sixth formers also had the privilege of sitting in “the big room in the Science block” and watching cricket and rugby matches from its large window or veranda. Along with these trivial privileges, sixth formers were also given the power to reprimand and punish juniors, physically if necessary²⁶⁷.

Langley allowed his prefects to cane junior boys. David Brokensha recalls that on his first day at DHS, with his new straw basher placed neatly on his head, he

“walked under an arch, and was promptly told by one of the school prefects to follow him. I knew the senior boy- everyone knew Skonk Nicholson [head boy, captain of both cricket and rugby] and I wondered why he should deign to notice me. Taking me to the ‘boot room’, where several other prefects lounged about, he told me to bend over, and, with no explanation, he caned me. It was not very painful: I remember feeling above all puzzled as to what my offence was. As I left the room, one of the prefects said, ‘next time, you will pay respect and remove your basher.’”

He later learnt that the arch he had walked under was a memorial to DHS boys who had been killed in the First World War²⁶⁸.

²⁶⁴ DHS Magazine. March 1914. 4

²⁶⁵ Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 23

²⁶⁶ DHS Magazine. Michaelmas 1924. 26-27

²⁶⁷ DHS Magazine. Michaelmas 1924. 26-29

²⁶⁸ Brokensha. “Youth”.

Langley's commitment to upholding the schoolboy hierarchy was designed not merely to assist masters in their efforts to organise inter-house games but also to maintain discipline. In the reflections contained in his farewell message in the June 1931 edition of the DHS magazine he assessed that DHS was "at the pinnacle of its glory" because he had left behind "the materials of a great Public School...pride of school and tradition are in the hearts of all; the heaven is working, and boys will serve their state as they have served their School²⁶⁹."

Whilst the high status and leadership roles given to the senior boys definitely strengthened the boys' ties to their school, it is difficult to ascertain whether these roles improved their self-discipline and sense of privileged duty as suggested by Wilkinson. What is less debatable is the fact that these privileges and responsibilities taught senior boys to direct their subordinate peers, a skill necessary for their future leadership roles²⁷⁰. The public schools' hierarchical and privilege system was a microcosm of the British Empire and its imperial service. Through this educational system, DHS boys, in their role as prefects and captains, became aware of the hierarchical nature of empire and comfortable with the concept of superiority and inflicting corrective violence towards subordinates²⁷¹.

Prefectural duties taught young men how to take control of situations, to make quick decisions, and to assert their authority²⁷². The Clarendon Commission report of 1864 concluded that the prefect system "promoted independence and manliness of character²⁷³." This sentiment was even put forward 65 years later by the delegates of the 1929 Conference of Headmasters and Headmistresses of Private Schools of South Africa, South Africa's version of the Headmasters' Conference in the United Kingdom, when they unanimously agreed that the prefect system was "beneficial both to the general discipline of the schools and to the personal character of the boys and girls on whom responsibility was placed²⁷⁴." The continuity of sentiment expressed by these statements, in addition to Langley's own utterances and actions, highlight the fact that school masters such as Langley saw the public school hierarchical system as a perfect tool to mould the masculinities of their male students in such a way that they were capable, if called upon, to fill leadership roles within the imperial service and execute the violent responsibilities often associated with these roles.

Whilst many sociologists have highlighted the pressures prefect duties placed on young men, school service was not without its rewards. The most striking privilege afforded to school prefects was the practice of 'fagging'. 'Fagging', which continues in a limited form at some South African schools today, was the practice of junior boys performing duties for senior boys in the sixth form (matric) and for prefects. Michael Cope recalls that his father Jack

²⁶⁹ DHS Magazine. June 1931. 2

²⁷⁰ Francis. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 71

²⁷¹ Francis. *Tirocinium Imperii*. 72-73

²⁷² Paul Rich. *Elixir of Empire: The English Public Schools, Ritualism, Freemasonry, and Imperialism*. (London: Regency Press, 1989). 101

²⁷³ Parliamentary Papers. "Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Revenues and Management of Certain Colleges and Schools, and Studies Pursued and Instruction Given therein." (Clarendon Commission Report) *Reports from Commissioners for 1864* (21 & 22: 5 & 6, 1864). 43

²⁷⁴ A. Sutcliffe. *The Story of The Conference of Headmasters and Headmistresses of Private Schools of South Africa During its First Half Century*. (Johannesburg, 1986). 3

“had to fag for prefects who could also beat them²⁷⁵.” ‘Fagging duties’ would require boys like Jack to fetch and carry books, deliver messages, polish shoes, and make toast. Whilst the practical rationale behind fagging was to make the lives of seniors easier during their most demanding academic year, its ideological rationale was to familiarise juniors with hierarchy, discipline and the price of privilege²⁷⁶. This sentiment was supported by the guest speaker of Maritzburg College’s 1914 prize giving, the Honourable Charles Smythe. Smythe voiced his support for the public school tradition of ‘fagging’ by arguing that it taught the junior boy concerned “valuable lessons in the way of discipline²⁷⁷ ...” The 1929 Private School Conference also endorsed the principle of hierarchical obedience and tasking. “The fagging of new boys for seniors was generally felt to be good for the new boys but not so good for the seniors²⁷⁸.” The conference liked the principle of younger boys being taught to value service and authority but did not want seniors to become used to a life of privilege and luxury when many hardships lay ahead of them.

In addition to imprinting on junior boys’ masculine characters an understanding of service and a respect for rank, the prefect and fagging system was also supposed to provide a healthy platform for the interaction between junior and senior boys. The fagging system was promoted by public school masters with the belief that it would foster amongst juniors an idolatry of boys who displayed intelligence and physical prowess²⁷⁹. Considering the fact that Langley’s prefects were almost always members of his first cricket and rugby teams, junior boys at DHS would have had fine physical examples on which to model their own masculinity.

In conclusion, Langley’s covert curriculum was based on and complemented a long tradition of public school discipline, privation and hierarchy. This tradition was encouraged by the authorities of public schools with the belief that tradition would encourage boys to develop tough masculinities capable of both serving in and leading the empire’s various service arms. College and DHS traditions mirrored Langley’s own upbringing, an upbringing in which he was acclimatized to violent discipline, privation and hierarchy. Noting the public school tradition and his own upbringing, this chapter has illustrated why Langley implemented his own ‘covert toughening curriculum’ at DHS. He hoped that this curriculum- characterised by use of the cane and endorsement of privation and hierarchy- would mould boys with a masculine character that was physically robust, capable of stoical resilience, aware of one’s duty and capable of firm command.

²⁷⁵ Correspondence with Michael Cope (son of Jack Cope- a famous author, academic and a scholar under ASL) Mar 14, 2014.

²⁷⁶ Morrell. “Masculinity and the White Boys’ Boarding Schools of Natal”. 17 and Rupert Wilkinson. *The Prefects: British Leadership and the Public School Tradition*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1964). 15

²⁷⁷ MCM. June 1914. 9

²⁷⁸ Sutcliffe. *The Story of The Conference of Headmasters and Headmistresses*. 3

²⁷⁹ Paul Nash. “Training an Elite”. *History of Education Quarterly*. (1: 1, 1961). 17

Chapter 6:

Rebels, Defiance and Langley's Response

“Life was not easy in Langley’s day for those who were rebellious by nature and contemptuous of authority. If you were caught rubbing up against Madevu you paid for it²⁸⁰.”

Hubert Jennings describing the school lives of those boys who rebelled against Langley’s mission.

As Loretta Trickett surmised in an article on school bullying, it is important to examine ambiguity and resistance to hegemony as well as compliance²⁸¹. Despite Langley’s intimidating regime and personal presence, there were boys who refused to toe the line. Langley’s attempts to suppress individuality and create a uniform masculine mould were not entirely successful. There were a number of boys at Langley’s school who rebelled against his system and rejected the masculine code he sought to spread. These boys, often referred to by Langley as “loafers”, are an important aspect of Langley’s story as they provide an alternative lens through which one can view Langley and his educational philosophy.

This chapter highlights the resistance to, the contradictions of, and flaws inherent in Langley’s educational ideology. In order to accomplish this, this chapter draws on the testimonies of three men who clashed with Langley when they were schoolboys under him at DHS. Along with providing a different view of Langley, these testimonies illustrate the contested nature of masculinity formation in schools. The voices of these men highlight the

²⁸⁰ Hubert Jennings. *The DHS Story, 1866-1966*. (Durban: Durban High School and Old Boys’ Memorial Trust, 1966). 217

²⁸¹ Loretta Trickett. “Bullying Boys: An Examination of Hegemonic Masculinity in the Playground.” *Internet Journal of Criminology*. (2009). 2

limitations of Langley's master plan to promote conformity, the unavoidable process of 'othering' in the consolidation of gender identity and the lengths Langley went to promote a uniform understanding of what it was to be a man.

Differentiation of Masculinities

The adoption of a masculine code is an extremely complex process and this illustrates that Langley and DHS were not the only actors/factors that contributed to the constructions of his students' sense of masculinity. Much of this construction plays out in the child's home environment before he is sent to school. As a result, boys are presented with conflicting versions of masculinity by different male role models at different times in their development. In addition to this, boys cultivate their sense of masculinity at differing pace and at different stages²⁸².

Different configurations of masculinity always exist because masculinity is itself a contested identity. Raewyn Connell presented a framework to make sense of the fluid and contested terrain, identifying hegemonic, complicit, subordinate and protest masculinities. This was part of what she called the "differentiation of masculinities"²⁸³. Scholars following on from Connell have illustrated that schools as institutional environments are active in the construction of masculinities. Research conducted by Wayne Martino and, Mairtin Mac an Ghail and Chris Haywood identify the existence of four distinct forms of masculinity at each of the two schools they sampled²⁸⁴.

The term hegemonic originates from the writings of Marxist theorist and politician Antonio Gramsci who, in his theory of cultural hegemony, argued that the ruling class manipulates the society over which they lord so that the culture of the ruling class is accepted by the lower classes as the cultural norm. These beliefs, explanations, perceptions, and values convince the lower classes that the system is just and that their inferiority within the system is natural and fair. This, Gramsci argues, is the way in which the upper classes maintain the status quo²⁸⁵. Similarly, proponents of hegemonic masculinity argue that there is a hierarchy of men within every ethno-economic community²⁸⁶. They argue that a prescriptive form of masculinity comes into existence which legitimates the dominance of certain boys and men. This masculine code evolves and is contested but it functions to discipline those who seek to reject or defy that code. The boys who rebelled against Langley questioned the legitimacy of his masculine prescriptions. They challenged the authority of the institutions he established and

²⁸² Fabrice Neddam. "Constructing masculinities under Thomas Arnold of Rugby (1828-1842): gender educational policy and school life in an early-Victorian public school." *Gender and Education*. (16: 3, 2004). 312

²⁸³ Raewyn Connell. "Cool Guys, Swot sand Wimps: The Interplay of Masculinity and Education." *Oxford Review of Education*. (15: 3, 1989).

²⁸⁴ Wayne Martino. "'Cool boys', 'party animals', 'squids' and poofers': interrogating the dynamics and politics of adolescent masculinities in school." *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. (20: 2, 1999) and Mairtin Mac an Ghail and Chris Haywood. "Researching Schooling and the Making of English Boys," in Blye Frank and Kevin Davison (eds). *Masculinities and Schooling: International Practices and Perspectives*. (London: The Althouse Press, 2007).

²⁸⁵ Raewyn Connell. *Ruling class, Ruling Culture*. (Cambridge: CUP Archive, 1977).

²⁸⁶ Zillah Eisenstein, ed. *Capitalist patriarchy and the case for socialist feminism*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979).

supported.²⁸⁷ In the case of Langley's rebels, DHS served as the rock on which they shaped their masculine identities.

The Rebels

The schoolboy experiences of boys who rebelled at school are rarely captured in school magazines and histories because these publications are often solely focused on the deeds of boys who rose to positions of leadership and/or athletic prominence and thereby conformed to the hegemonic code. Fortunately, the experiences of three boys (Roy Campbell, Jack Cope and Noel Langley) who did not conform at Langley's DHS have been recorded for posterity due to the fact that these boys went on to achieve international acclaim after school.

Roy Campbell was the first of our rebels to be schooled at Langley's DHS. Campbell, who went on to become one of South Africa's most accomplished authors and poets, went to DHS from 1913 to 1918. As a boy Campbell was scatter brained and romantic. It was not uncommon for Campbell to forget a task given to him by his parents only to found reading a book somewhere, totally oblivious of his responsibility²⁸⁸. Despite his unquestionable intelligence, it was this demeanour that saw him clash with Langley.

The second of our rebels was Langley's only son. Noel. He was born at DHS on Christmas Day 1911 and enrolled at DHS, despite opposing council from Hubert Jennings, in 1925. According to Jennings, Noel was a "clever, humorous, romantic, and physically indolent boy, prone to reverie and day dreams." As a result, he regarded organised sport as "meaningless and a waste of time." It's no wonder Jennings said that Langley saw Noel as a "betrayal of fate" and "born to discredit him"²⁸⁹.

The last of our rebels was Jack Cope. Cope, who later went on to become a distinguished author and editor, was at DHS from 1927 to 1930. By Cope's own admission, as a schoolboy he was "rebellious by nature" "with a contempt for authority." With these personality traits it is not difficult to understand why Cope's four years at DHS were characterised by rebellion and "flaming rows" with the authorities at DHS²⁹⁰.

Rebel Resistance

The schoolboy lives of Campbell, Noel and Cope were characterised by resistance to Langley's mission. They rebelled against the athletic, academic and covert aspects of Langley's educational philosophy. The most evident and primary avenue of their resistance was their aversion to sport and cadets. Roy Campbell, despite being physically big and powerful with athletic potential, did not extend himself with team sports like cricket and rugby. Although he admired the violence of rugby, Campbell's lack of discipline and teamwork meant that he failed to commit himself or achieve athletically at DHS.

²⁸⁷ Connell. "Cool Guys, Swot sand Wimps." 294

²⁸⁸ Peter Alexander. *Roy Campbell: A Critical Biography*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982). 9-17

²⁸⁹ Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 211

²⁹⁰ Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 216

Unlike Campbell's inconsistent athletic record, Noel Langley's time at DHS was characterised by complete athletic apathy. Noel did his best to avoid the team sports offered at DHS which he, as mentioned earlier, regarded as "meaningless and a waste of time." Even if he had enjoyed sport, a 'leaky heart valve' ensured that he was kept off the playing fields and cadet parade grounds²⁹¹.

Noel's classmate Jack Cope also seems to have spurned Langley's athletic regime. In a letter to Hubert Jennings, Cope claimed that he "detested" organised sport and "was never any good at rugby or cricket" despite being keen on social exercises like tennis and swimming. Cope said that he was prone to reading books whilst fielding on the boundary of the cricket field and often forgot to change position at the end of an over²⁹².

Another way in which these boys rebelled was by clowning around in class and adopting dismissive attitudes toward the academic curriculum offered at DHS. Despite, or possibly because of, his intelligence, Campbell despised the repetitive academic conventions of the day and the rigidity of school rules. This dismissive attitude led Campbell to clown around in class, become "completely subversive²⁹³" and leave DHS with a third-class matriculation pass²⁹⁴.

Another one of the rebels who took to clowning around was Noel Langley. According to Jennings, Noel "was the acknowledged class jester" who was often caught sketching or reading during lessons²⁹⁵. Despite his father's best efforts to beat some seriousness into him, Noel's clowning continued and was probably an essential ingredient in the theatrical success he achieved later in life.

Whilst Jack Cope adopted a studious approach to his school work, his frustration with Langley's approach to education meant that he became disillusioned with structured academics. This frustration led Cope to turn down a handsome university bursary and proceed into the working world.

Whilst Cope does not seem to have rebelled directly against the academic sphere of Langley's DHS, he did his best to undermine the covert elements of Langley's educational philosophy by engaging in a number of subversive boycotts and demonstrative campaigns. According to Cope, his time at DHS was characterised by "food strikes against the infamous dish 'Muck-on-toast'", "passive resistance against church" and "flaming rows." One of his major disagreements was with the prefect and privilege system. Cope claims that he was "sure I was never even considered as a prefect and probably would have refused to be one because I objected violently to the right of boys to cane one another²⁹⁶."

²⁹¹ Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 211

²⁹² Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 217

²⁹³ Roy Campbell. *Light on a Dark Horse: An Autobiography (1901-1935)*. (London: Hollis and Carter, 1969).

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²⁹⁴ Joseph Pearce. *Bloomsbury and Beyond: The Friends and Enemies of Roy Campbell*. (London: Harper Collins, 2001). 17

²⁹⁵ Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 213

²⁹⁶ Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 216

Langley's Response

As these examples suggest, these boys did not fit in with the notion of manliness Langley promoted at DHS. Although an artist himself²⁹⁷, Langley loved boys who participated in every aspect of school life and who sacrificed their free time in the service of the school. Langley publicly praised these boys, honoured them with titles and wept when they died in battle. These boys became his sporting captains, prefects, head boys, high ranking members of the old boy's association and ultimately his pall bearers²⁹⁸.

Langley's method of dealing with boys who not did meet, or strive to meet, his ideal was to inflict physical and psychological punishment. All of our rebels recall having been subjected to fierce beatings by Langley. Roy Campbell claimed that he "was thrashed frequently, as I thoroughly deserved²⁹⁹..." Likewise Jack Cope told Jennings that his "rump used to be black for months on end³⁰⁰." So frequent was this abuse that Cope developed a vocabulary to describe various kinds of marks left by Langley's cane³⁰¹.

In Noel's case, Jennings recalls that Langley was determined to beat some seriousness into his son³⁰². According to Jean Thomassen, Langley's grandniece, Langley "was particularly hard on both my Dad and his cousin, Noel, believing he should make examples of his own family members³⁰³." This is not difficult to believe as Langley, who was one of Natal's most prominent public figures, was most definitely conscious of his public image and the expectation that he, as a teacher, should be promoting the same masculine values expected by the empire both at school and at home.

Whilst Langley's beatings were bad enough in themselves, Roy Campbell claimed that they were nothing compared with the way in which he, and other boys like him, was "held up to the school as a freak" during Langley's assemblies³⁰⁴. Boys who displayed similar character traits to our rebels were publicly humiliated by Langley and often encouraged to transfer to 'the tech' (The Durban Technical High School or Glenwood High School as it is known today). The ruthless humiliation and dismissal of boys who did not fit the DHS mould is evident in Langley's memoirs when he states:

"the policy of welcoming all boys who put on the colours and forgot themselves in their endeavour to do something for their school was adopted with satisfactory results. Those who could not face up to this were encouraged to go down to the bottom of the Berea

²⁹⁷ Roy Campbell described Langley as "the queerest mixture of sensitive artist and stern disciplinarian"

²⁹⁸ The Natal Mercury. 24 December 1939.

²⁹⁹ Campbell. *Light on a Dark Horse*. 69

³⁰⁰ Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 216

³⁰¹ Correspondence with Michael Cope (son of Jack Cope- a famous author, academic and a scholar under ASL) Mar 14, 2014.

³⁰² Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 213

³⁰³ Correspondence with Jean Thomassen (Great granddaughter of RD Clark and grandniece of ASL) 26 October 2013

³⁰⁴ Campbell. *Light on a Dark Horse*. 69

Road (to the Technical High School), and duly subscribe to the hate³⁰⁵, which did not worry D.H.S.³⁰⁶.”

Langley believed that by publically humiliating boys who did not adequately measure up to his masculine ideals, he was encouraging them to either conform or leave his school. Whilst Langley believed that this method would have led to conformity, or at least outward conformity, in some cases- the main outcome of Langley’s humiliations was actually a construction at DHS of the ‘masculine other’.

When Langley publically humiliated boys, he held them out as an example of masculinity that was both alien and undesirable. Masculinity is generally defined against a binary other³⁰⁷. Failure to meet a masculine norm frequently earns hurtful questioning of one’s heterosexual masculinity, being thought of as a ‘fake male’³⁰⁸. Although all of our rebels were heterosexual, their unsporty, artistic and rebellious natures would have meant that some of the rebels were likened to homosexuals and Africans. Jackie Harris, Noel Langley’s great niece, heard rumours that Noel was homosexual when she was studying at university. This process of othering also resulted in Jack Cope, whose schoolboy career was characterised by rebellion, being referred to as an African by a master who told him, in front of the entire DHS boarding establishment, to get back to his “kraal” after having an argument with Cope³⁰⁹. Discipline and uniformity were character traits associated with DHS’ hegemonic brand of masculinity. Because Cope’s rebelliousness and individuality were alien masculine traits his character would have been associated with the other, in this case, an African³¹⁰.

In order to distance themselves from rebellious boys, who were considered queer and feminine, many a DHS boy thought it appropriate to bully and pick fights with the rebels. This was not unusual as physical bullying and fighting are often a result of boys wanting to disassociate themselves from the binary ‘other’ lest their peers begin to level suspicions against their masculinity³¹¹.

In his first few years at DHS, Roy Campbell was bullied by the boyfriend of a girl, referred to only as “pigtails”, he liked. According to Campbell, “pigtails”’ boyfriend was three years older and, in their first fight, gave him “a terrible knocking about”³¹².” Like Campbell, Noel Langley was also picked on as a result of a schoolboy crush. Noel was provoked into a fight by a boy called Vaisey Court after Court found out that Noel had been courting Joan Brett, a girl both boys fancied. The fight sounds quite organised with the Head boy playing referee.

³⁰⁵ Langley claimed in his memoirs that ‘Tech’ boys were taught to hate DHS.

³⁰⁶ Aubrey Samuel Langley. *Youthful Reminiscences of Natal in the Seventies*. 25

³⁰⁷ Trickett. “Bullying Boys.” 20

³⁰⁸ K Ratele *et al.* “‘Moffies, jock and cool guys’: boys’ accounts of masculinity and their resistance in context” in Tammy Shefer, Kopano Ratele, Anna Strebela, Nokuthula Shabalala and Rosemarie Buikema (eds), *From Boys to Men: Social constructions of masculinity in contemporary society* (Cape Town, University of Cape Town Press, 2007). 116

³⁰⁹ Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 216

³¹⁰ Debbie Epstein. “Marked Men: whiteness and masculinity.” *Agenda*. (37:1, 1998). 57

³¹¹ Trickett. “Bullying Boys.” 8-9

³¹² Campbell. *Light on a Dark Horse*. 73

Noel was beaten thoroughly, apparently to the delight of the entire sixth form³¹³. It is interesting to note that both these boys were alienated despite their obvious heterosexual tendencies. Heterosexuality does not automatically confer hegemonic masculine status on an individual. The fact that one's masculine identity rested on more than one's sexual orientation is evident in that boys who are unsporty or artistic are often bullied as a result of female interaction because other boys cannot understand why popular or good looking girls pay attention to boys who do not display hegemonic masculine traits³¹⁴.

Unlike Campbell and Noel, the recollections of Jack Cope and his son, Michael, never specifically mention a major fight. However, Michael's mention of the "Cope Gang" highlights the fact that Cope and his rebellious friends were victims of bullying. According to Michael, the violence his father and his peers faced was so severe that "...he and his twin brother Tom, along with some other boys from the Mooi River area and later his one-year-younger brother Dave, formed the 'Cope gang' for self-protection³¹⁵." Michael explains that the "Cope Gang" were targeted because they "were rebels not much given to school spirit³¹⁶."

Langley seems to have tolerated student brawls and the bullying of rebels. Bill Payn recalled that when he was boy at Maritzburg College he once had a fight with a boy from Zululand. He was so badly cut up from the fight that he went the next day to Langley to excuse himself from church parade. According to Bill, rather than being reprimanded for fighting, Langley bellowed "What rot! You young cub! You go to church and you will be able to sing *Fight the Good Fight* with greater feeling³¹⁷." Langley's tolerance of student brawls and bullying is also evident in the fact that he and staff were often present at fights and yet did nothing to intervene. Langley's protégé, 'Betsy' Martin, was present at Roy Campbell's fight with "Pigtails" boyfriend and Langley seems to have organised a rematch a few years later believing that "Pigtails" boyfriend would give Campbell another clobbering³¹⁸. Hubert Jennings records that he was present at Noel's fight with Vaisey Court and yet he also seems to have done nothing to halt the one-sided affair.

Probably the most damning evidence to suggest that Langley tolerated the bullying of rebels is contained in his address on the Function of Athleticism in Education. In his address Langley said "Gentlemen, we cannot kill the loafer [uncommitted and rebellious boys whom he compared to devious nocturnal hunters earlier on in his address], but I'd set the athletes of his own size and age to take away his scent-bag³¹⁹." This anecdote illustrates, besides the fact that he despised "loafers" and that he favoured athletes, that Langley believed that bullying

³¹³ Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 212

³¹⁴ Trickett. "Bullying Boys." 15

³¹⁵ Correspondence with Michael Cope (son of Jack Cope- a famous author, academic and a scholar under ASL) Mar 14, 2014.

³¹⁶ Correspondence with Michael Cope (son of Jack Cope- a famous author, academic and a scholar under ASL) Mar 14, 2014.

³¹⁷ Simon Haw and Richard Frame. *For Hearth and Home: The Story of Maritzburg College, 1863-1988*. (Pietermaritzburg: MC Publications, 1988). 231

³¹⁸ Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 212

³¹⁹ MCM. June 1908. 22

might forcefully persuade rebellious boys to conform (removing his individuality- “his scent bag”).

Mixed Results

Despite his best efforts to promote uniformity, Langley’s physical and psychological bullying produced mixed results. His interactions with his son ensured that Noel’s early years were utter hell. Instead of beating some seriousness into his son, Langley drove Noel further away. Noel’s clowning paid off and after school he came to realise that he belonged in show business. After gaining some fame in local theatrical circles, Noel moved to London and later to America where he became a sought after screenwriter and author. Langley’s treatment of his son also ensured that Noel developed a deep hatred of his father. So deep was this disdain that Noel boasted to his friend Jack Cope that he would eventually kill his father. Cope shared this information with Jennings shortly before Langley’s death and added that Noel was succeeding in this endeavour by sending his father thousands of pounds each year “to finance his purchase of liquor³²⁰.”

Like Noel, Langley’s treatment of Jack Cope entrenched his rebelliousness and contempt for authority. After school Cope, fed up with controlled academics, turned down a scholarship to Rhodes University and chose instead to pursue a career in journalism. Despite a promising start, Cope left *The Natal Mercury* and its autocratic editor Kingston Russell to pursue a career as an author, editor and publisher³²¹. Cope’s writing, which often criticised the government and its policies, exhibits the same critical and rebellious flare that characterised his time at DHS.

Unlike Noel and Cope, Roy Campbell’s interaction with Langley and the environment he created at DHS did not have the same straight forward repellent effect. Whereas Noel and Cope came to reject almost everything Langley stood for, some of Campbell’s actions, especially in his adult life, illustrate that Langley’s physical and psychological harassment of Campbell led him to adopt many of the masculine character traits valorised by Langley.

Campbell’s accounts of his years at DHS contained in his autobiographies, *Broken Record* and *Light on a Dark Horse*, are probably the most widespread and enduring descriptions of Langley and his treatment of the boys under him. After reading these accounts one cannot help but see Campbell’s years at DHS as agonising and Langley as, as one of Campbell’s biographers- Joseph Pearce- describes him, “the headmaster from hell³²².” So turbulent was Campbell’s relationship with Langley that Campbell refused to mention him by name in his first autobiography, *Broken Record*, in 1934. However in his second autobiography, *Light on a Dark Horse*, Campbell devotes a whole chapter to Langley, which is aptly titled “The Surly Tutor of my Youth.” In this chapter Campbell creates a picture of Langley as a bully who would beat Campbell physically with his cane and emotionally abused him with insults

³²⁰ Stephen Gray. “Noel Langley & Co.: Some South Africans in Showbiz Abroad.” *Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa*. (24: 1, 2012). 18

³²¹ Jennings. *The DHS Story*. 218

³²² Joseph Pearce. *Bloomsbury and Beyond: The Friends and Enemies of Roy Campbell*. (London: Harper Collins, 2001). 10

directed at the Technical High School which was founded by Campbell's father in 1910³²³. Campbell also claims in this chapter that Langley forced him inadvertently to kill one of his friends Sid Wright during boxing practice. Langley apparently walked in on the practice and noticed that Campbell and Wright were not putting in the required effort. According to Roy, Langley began taunting him saying "Fight, you swine! Fight, you Technical Soccerite! I won't have any malingering in my school³²⁴!" Roy, wanting to prove Langley wrong, knocked out Sid who later died due to a brain haemorrhage. According to Campbell, Langley's treatment led him to have nightmares years after Langley's death.

Taking this disturbing narrative into consideration, it comes as a shock that many of Campbell's later actions are characterised by the masculine values Langley criticized Campbell for not displaying. Reading through Campbell's autobiographies and the comments of his biographers, one cannot help being struck by the sense that many of his actions stem from his desire to impress his old school master. Campbell himself obliquely acknowledged this saying that he owed Langley "the best half of my character³²⁵." Two of Campbell's biographers, Peter Alexander and Joseph Pearce echo this observation. According to Alexander "he [Langley] was to prove scarcely less of an influence on Campbell than his own father³²⁶." Similarly Pearce wrote that "A.S Langley, the headmaster from hell, was the final ingredient in the potent combination of influences which were working together to forge both the man and the writer³²⁷."

Through Langley's bullying tactics, and those of his prefects, Campbell began to detest the manly insufficiencies he saw in himself in contrast to the hegemonic brand of masculinity Langley and his minions exuded. Campbell's sought to please Langley and thereby rid himself of the feeling of inadequacy. Morrell argues that Campbell "spent his life trying to prove that he was a man, by drinking heavily, challenging male authority, and placing himself in physically dangerous situations³²⁸."

A perfect example of one of Campbell's acts of bravado was his 1915 attempt to run away, enlist in the army and make his way to the front line. Joseph Pearce claims that Campbell's "... efforts to enlist, and his running away from school in order to do so, we're no doubt prompted by his desperately unhappy time as the victim of Langley's cruelty³²⁹." What Pearce fails to acknowledge is that Langley encouraged his boys to join up and that Campbell desired to prove to Langley that he was not the 'slacker' Langley thought he was. It was the same desire that drove Campbell to knock out Sid Wright when Langley forced the two to fight and it was the same desire that caused Campbell to think "Yes: look what I can do³³⁰!"

³²³ Roy Campbell. *Light on a Dark Horse*. 69

³²⁴ Campbell. *Light on a Dark Horse*. 73

³²⁵ Roy Campbell. *Light on a Dark Horse*. 71

³²⁶ Alexander. *Roy Campbell: A Critical Biography*. 9

³²⁷ Pearce. *Bloomsbury and Beyond: The Friends and Enemies of Roy Campbell*. 10

³²⁸ Robert Morrell. *From Boys to Gentlemen: Settler Masculinity in Colonial Natal, 1880-1920*. (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2001). 97

³²⁹ Pearce. *Bloomsbury and Beyond: The Friends and Enemies of Roy Campbell*. 16

³³⁰ Campbell. *Light on a Dark Horse*. 73

when Langley saw Wright sprawled on the floor after Campbell had delivered the knockout blow.

The fact that part of Campbell's character was responsive to Langley's message of violent, assertive and patriotic manliness is evident in one of the poems Campbell wrote whilst at school. In this verse Campbell highlights the heroics of the "fierce legions" and "proud platoons". "I must cross the sea," the poem continues, "...and I must die³³¹." Not only does this poem highlight the part of Campbell's character that adhered to the jingoistic masculinity cultivated at Langley's DHS, it also highlights that fact that Campbell desperately wanted to show Langley that he harboured the same masculine desires as those DHS boys who had died in battle and who Langley immortalised in his assembly addresses and in the photographs he displayed in his study.

Campbell's desire to prove Langley wrong seems to have extended into his adult life and literary exploits. Whilst Campbell initially seemed opposed to the classical models of literature and prose favoured by Langley's curriculum, he was later attracted to "an ideology of classicism." According to Tony Voss "Campbell finds classical models for all his modes: from satire (Juvenal, Horace) to epic (Lucan)..." Campbell's decision to live along the Mediterranean coast was, according to Voss, a ploy to emerge himself "in the Roman past." As an admirer of the colonial legacy of Rome, Campbell once asked, "What are we civilized Europeans but the Roman Empire³³²?" Literary analyst John Hilton even goes as far as to argue that Campbell's adoption of Roman Catholicism highlights his total shift towards classical values³³³. One of Campbell's most important works and his most extensive homage to the classics was his translation of Horace's *Ars Poetica*. Whilst Tony Voss hints that Campbell may have translated Horace's work in order to "take his revenge on Langley³³⁴", it seems more likely that his work on *Ars Poetica* was just another attempt by Campbell to show Langley that he was as much a classicist as he was.

Campbell's turbulent relationship with Langley stems from the frustration he must have experienced, as Alexander puts it, at not being able to impress one of his great idols³³⁵. Although Campbell never mentions this directly, he does highlight the fact that he sought Langley's recognition in *Light on a Dark Horse* when he said: "More than half the school will have died for him; and even I (who abominated him) was always elated for days if I could accidentally earn a word of praise from him³³⁶."

This chapter has illustrated that Langley's mission to promote rugged masculine traits and uniformity at his school was not uniformly embraced. Some boys who were either unable or were disinclined to participate in team sports and who scorned the pedagogy and practices of

³³¹ Pearce. *Bloomsbury and Beyond: The Friends and Enemies of Roy Campbell*. 16

³³² Tony Voss. "Where Roy Campbell Stands." *Literator*. (34: 1, 2013). 6

³³³ John Hilton. "The Sacred Cities of the Mind: Roy Campbell and the Classics" in J. Hilton and A. Gosling (eds.) *Alma Parens Originalis: The Reception of Classical Literature and Thought in Africa, Europe, the United States and Cuba*. (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007). 135-157

³³⁴ Voss. "Where Roy Campbell stands". 378

³³⁵ Alexander. *Roy Campbell: A Critical Biography*. 9

³³⁶ Campbell. *Light on a Dark Horse*. 68

DHS were defiant. Langley did not take this lightly and used his personal power as headmaster as well as the instruments of the school emotionally and physically to punish the rebels and force them into line. These measures produced mixed results. In most cases, his vicious treatment of these rebels seemed to reinforce their contempt for his values. However, as the example of Roy Campbell has illustrated, Langley's fierce tactics occasionally resulted in a lifelong conflict of character in which men struggled to come to terms with their own masculinity and the manliness promoted by the man they longed to please.

Chapter 7:

“Valete Amici Omnes³³⁷”: Farewell All Friends

The title of Langley's farewell message in the June 1931 edition of the DHS Magazine.

Early in the research I conducted for my honours thesis (in 2011) I came to realise the importance of Aubrey Samuel Langley and his educational philosophy in shaping the two oldest high schools in Natal and, indeed, of his broader impact on the gendered nature of settler society in Natal. Described by M. A Peacock in *Some Famous Schools in South Africa* as Natal's most successful Headmaster³³⁸, just under 20 000 boys were guided by Langley during his time as the Senior Resident Master at Maritzburg College and Headmaster of DHS. In addition, Langley also influenced a number of Natal's most influential educators when they taught under him at DHS.

This thesis is built on the modest foundations I dug during my initial studies as well as the much more substantial foundations created by separate but complementary literatures on the public schools of the UK and their shaping of gender relations between men in educational institutions. The public schools of the UK were factories of masculinity and their products were exported to all corners of the empire. In this thesis, I explain why the public school system was adopted by the upper classes of Natal's white population and highlight the impact this system had on the masculine character of the Natal gentry.

In its analysis of Langley's life and educational philosophy, this thesis has revealed Langley's mission to preserve and promote a classical curriculum. Apart from highlighting the practical criticisms levelled against the classics, the chapter dealing with Langley's classical curriculum shows how its defendants warded off these criticisms and succeeded in entrenching an obsolete set of subjects on the extra-pedagogical argument that it taught good

³³⁷ DHS Magazine. June 1931. 2

³³⁸ M. A Peacock. *Some Famous Schools in South Africa. Vol. 1: English Medium Boy's High Schools.* (Cape Town: Longman, 1972). 54

discipline and generated cultural capital. Langley mobilized four main arguments when protecting and promoting a classics-heavy curriculum at DHS, claiming that it had social, moral, mental and imperial benefits.

The first angle Langley took to defend the classical nature of DHS' curriculum was social status. The fact that classical subjects did not provide students with skills needed for future employment meant that classical instruction was the preserve of the privileged classes. Langley's actions and speeches highlight his belief that his DHS boys, along with boys from Natal's three other 'public schools', were part of white Natal's social elite and thus were destined to take up high ranking positions within either the government or imperial service. As a result, Langley argued that his boys did not need to concern themselves with subjects that taught vocational skills as they were not destined for private enterprise. Langley, like many of his classically trained contemporaries, argued that instruction in classical languages improved one's 'mental stamina'. Because of the repetitive manner in which Langley taught and examined classical languages, he claimed that students who successfully mastered languages such as Ancient Greek and Latin had acquired and displayed the mental discipline needed to take up any position within the British imperial service.

In his promotion of the classics Langley argued that instruction would assist in the moral and cultural development of schoolboys. Because students were exposed to ethical dilemmas found in classical literature, Langley argued that a classics-heavy curriculum produced men of moral fortitude and culture. He also believed that a knowledge of classical texts ensured that boys became 'cultured' and gave them the social skills necessary for successful immersion in the upper echelons of British colonial and metropolitan society.

The classics filled students with an imperial spirit. They centred on the Ancient Greek and Roman worlds and thus acquainted students with the advantages, duties and challenges of empires. This created a link between classical study and imperial service, providing a grounding that was needed by men wishing to join the Indian Civil Service and British Army Officers Corps.

Although he was a noted classicist, Langley was probably more widely known in Natal because of his efforts in promoting the game of rugby at a schoolboy and club level. Taking this into consideration, it is natural that any analysis of his life and educational philosophy should investigate his promotion of team sports like rugby and cricket. The chapter dedicated to Langley's promotion of team sport illustrates both the rationale behind and the perceived benefits of the athletic aspect of Langley's educational regime.

Langley was obsessed with the fear that the Anglo-Saxon race was in decline and that Britain was facing an increasing number of threats from rebellious colonial subjects and European rivals. As a result of these fears, Langley added an athletic element to his educational regime in order to promote (amongst his pupils) a masculinity that was physically robust, quick thinking and selfless. Langley's obsession with team sports and their promotion at a schoolboy level was, like his promotion of classical subjects, part of his mission to secure

gentlemanly status for his students. Like classical instruction, Langley believed that a schoolboy's participation in gentlemanly team sports such as cricket and rugby promoted the idea that he was part of the imperial elite, more than fit enough, in both body and character, to serve as companions to the public school elite of the British mainland.

Langley believed in corporal punishment and used it liberally, gaining a fearsome reputation for his use of the cane. The best known (and most extreme) example of his passion for punishment was when he personally caned the entire pupil complement at DHS. Discipline was a key element of Langley's covert curriculum. Other elements were the promotion of a Spartan living environment and the endorsement of a pupil hierarchy and privilege system. Whilst the covert aspect of Langley's educational philosophy may shock modern readers, he believed that these structures were needed to toughen the students under his care.

Langley's belief that boys needed to undergo a process of hardening stemmed both from his own rugged upbringing and his fear that the British Empire was under threat. Langley, whose upbringing was characterised by frequent beatings and occasional privation, believed that corporal punishment, domestic privation and an entrenched system of hierarchy and privilege acclimatised boys to the harsh realities of life on the imperial frontier. Because Langley believed that his boys were destined to assume leadership positions with the imperial service, he assumed that a regime of toughening would equip boys with the stoical fortitude, respect for authority and leadership experience needed to administer and protect the empire.

Langley went to great lengths in his mission to promote a masculinity that was physically robust, capable of stoical resilience, made boys aware of the necessity of duty and capable of firm command through the implementation of an intense athletic program, taxing classical study and a harsh covert curriculum. Nevertheless a number of his students did not adhere to this version of masculinity. In fact a number of boys actively rebelled against the athletic, academic and covert structures Langley installed at DHS.

The fact that Langley's educational philosophy occasionally engendered rebellion is not surprising when one takes into consideration the findings of masculinity theorists such as Raewyn Connell. Connell's research highlights a process of the "differentiation of masculinities", which is accompanied by competing understandings of what it is to be a man. Generally one particular understanding becomes the ideal, hegemonic, and it is against this version of masculinity that boys were measured, judged and disciplined.

In order to contribute to the body of research Connell and other masculine theorists have amassed, this thesis investigates the forms of resistance undertaken by Langley's rebels, the way in which they were treated by Langley and the results of this treatment. After highlighting the dismissive attitude these rebels adopted towards Langley's team sports, academic regime and covert 'hardening structures', it highlights the way in which Langley sought to impose his beliefs, using physical and mental bullying. Whilst Langley's physical and mental abuse of these rebels most often served to entrench their rebellion and contempt for Langley's ideas of manliness, Langley's harsh methods occasionally caused boys to question their masculine ideals and to go to great lengths to prove that they were indeed men.

During my time conducting research for and writing this thesis I have come across stories relating to Langley that would horrify the modern reader. Considering his zealous use of the cane, the brutal conditions under which his students lived, and the way he psychologically abused those boys who rebelled against his educational regime I also initially found it difficult to understand why parents flocked to send their sons to Langley's school. However, after coming to terms with Langley's own upbringing and the hostile environment in which he found himself, I gradually came to realise that Langley was not just an insensitive tyrant but also had deep feelings for his boys. Langley cared for and, in some cases, loved his boys. He avidly corresponded with and followed the progress of his students after they left school. The most poignant reminder of the fact that Langley took his pastoral duties to heart took place in a DHS assembly during the First World War. According to witnesses, Langley (the moustachioed disciplinarian) broke down in tears when reading the names of DHS old boys who had recently died in battle and had to leave the hall³³⁹.

I am not the only person who came to realise that Langley's 'reign of terror' was fuelled by a concern for his students and their lives after school. Jack Cope, the most rebellious of Langley's rebels, recalled that after hearing of Langley's death he suddenly saw his hatred of Langley for what it was. "There was no point and no justice in having any hatred or resentment stored up from the past," he said in a letter to Hubert Jennings. "What Madevu had done he had done for the good in his own lights, even if the treatment hurt me like hell³⁴⁰."

³³⁹ Hubert Jennings. *The D.H.S. Story. 1866-1966*. (Durban: The Durban High School and Old Boys' Memorial Trust, 1966). 121

³⁴⁰ Jennings. *The D.H.S. Story*. 218

Appendix:

Langley and his influences:

Langley nearing retirement



Langley (centre right) with R.D Clark



Rev James Langley



Langley and his disciples:

‘Bill’ Payn



A.C Martin, Langley and Payn

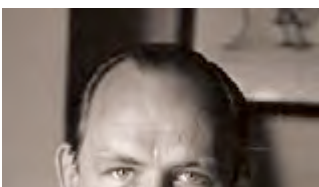


Neville Nuttall (top right)



Langley’s rebels:

Noel Langley



‘Roy’ Campbell



‘Jack’ Cope



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